Bonhams

MAGAZINE | SPRING 2023 ISSUE 74

Brush with greatness
Masterpieces of Chinese ink

Surreal partnership
Max Ernst and his muse

Money talks
The coin that solved a murder

Yayoi Kusama
From here to infinity

and
Sir Jackie Stewart
How it all began

DONATELLO
SCULPTING THE RENAISSANCE

V&A South Kensington
Open now
Tickets from £13
Members go free

Supported by
RF
ROCCO FORTE HOTELS

DISCOVER ONE OF THE GREATEST ARTISTS OF ALL TIME

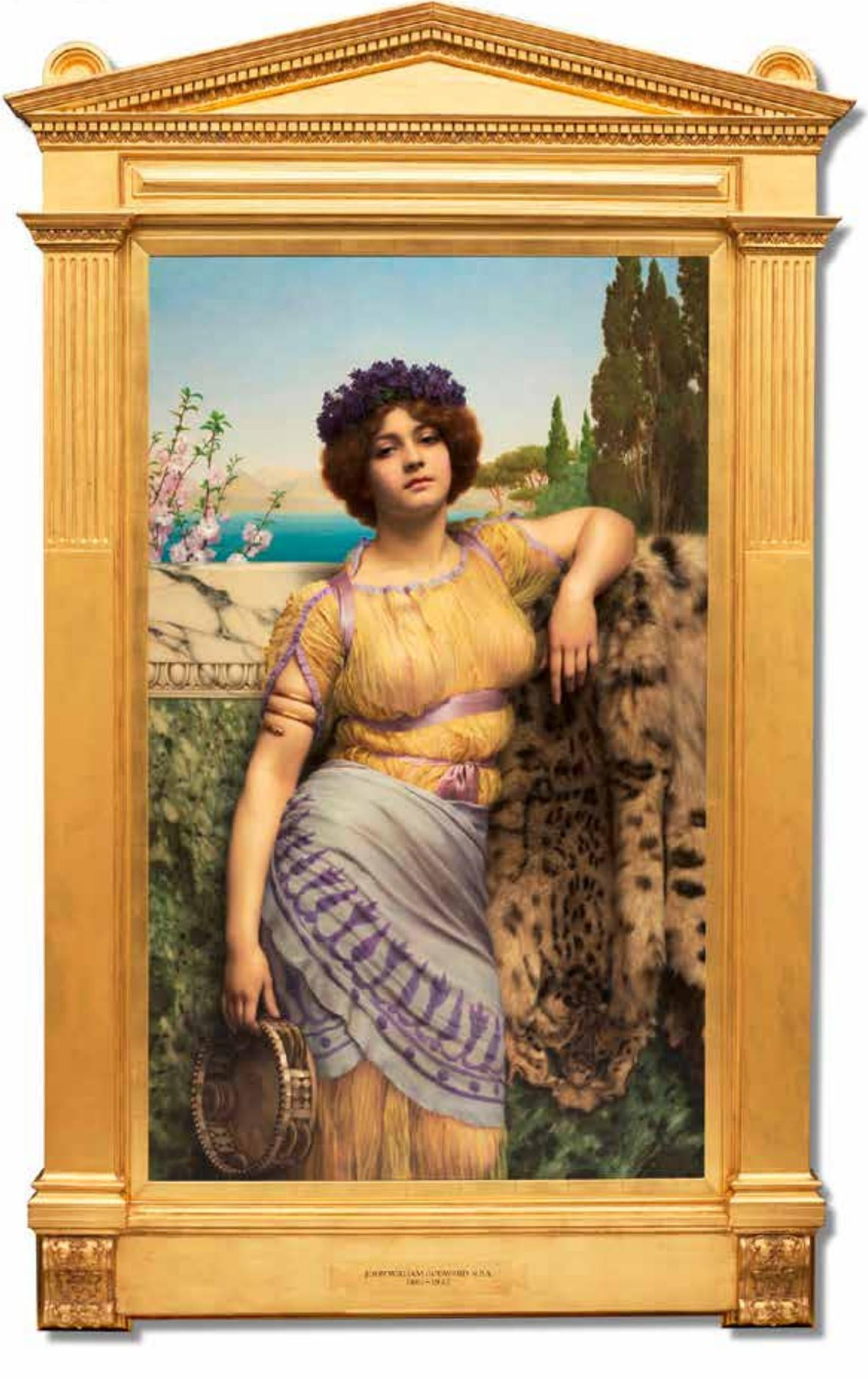
V&A

19th Century & British and Impressionist Art

London
Wednesday 29 March
2pm

John William Godward, RBA (British, 1861-1922)
Ionian Dancing Girl
signed and dated 'J.W.GODWARD 1902' (lower right)
oil on canvas
137.2 x 83.2cm (54 x 32in)
Estimate: £800,000 - 1,200,000
($1,000,000 - 1,500,000)

Enquiries: Charles O'Brien
+44 (0) 20 7468 8360
charles.obrien@bonhams.com



The Perfect Jewelry Box: Jewels from an Impressive Southern California Collection

New York
Wednesday 8 March
12pm

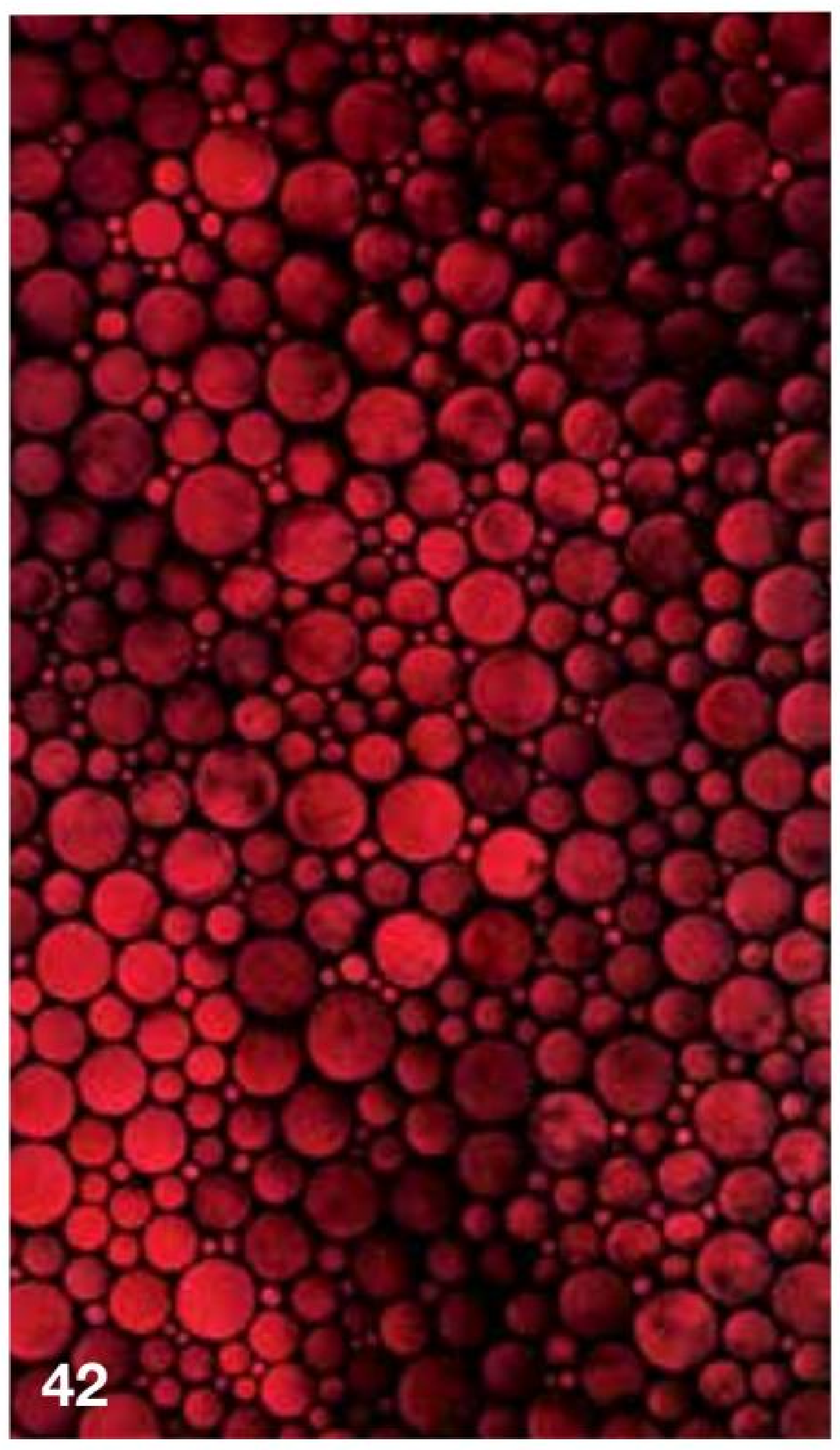
LEVIEV: A MAGNIFICENT DIAMOND RING
Centering an emerald-cut diamond, weighing 35.00 carats, accented by a round brilliant-cut diamond-set gallery and shank; estimated remaining weight 1.90 carats.
Estimate: $1,700,000 - 2,500,000
(£1,400,000 - 2,000,000)

Enquiries: Caroline Morrissey
+1 212 461 6526
caroline.morrissey@bonhams.com

Contents

Issue 74

48


42

5 Editor's letter
and contributors

Features

20 Hard currency
Just killed Caesar? Why not advertise the fact with a special coin. **Frank L. Holt** uncovers Brutus' unorthodox approach to assassination's aftermath

24 The art of scandal
It was tabloid fodder: John Ruskin's unconsumated marriage and the affair between Millais and his wife. But, **Christopher Newall** insists, the elder man was no naive cuckold

28 Unamused
Each of Max Ernst's lovers – and they were legion – was supremely talented in their own right. None more so than the troubled Marie-Berthe Aurenche, says **Mark Hudson**

34 Brush with greatness
When Michael Goedhuis takes an interest in Chinese art, the collectors soon follow. **Susan Moore** admires his collections of modern Chinese bronze and revolutionary ink paintings

38 Driven man
He called the motor cars of his fastest rival "lorries". He designed elegant cutlery. For Ettore Bugatti, no car could be considered brilliant unless it was also beautiful. **Neil Lyndon** agrees

42 Joining the dots
Michele Chan is given a special tour by Doryun Chong, curator of the new survey show of Yayoi Kusama in Hong Kong

48 Threading through time
Beware designers! Peta Smyth is closing her shop. **Serena Fokschaner** meets the doyenne of antique textiles

52 Beyond belief
Vasilii Polenov brought astonishing realism to his paintings of Bible scenes, **Claire Wrathall** explains, travelling for inspiration through the Holy Land, Egypt and Syria

56 Three chairs for *huanghuali*
Hard enough for exquisite carving, *huanghuali* wood was very rare. No wonder the Ming dynasty intellectual elite treasured furniture made from it, says **Emma Crichton-Miller**

Columns

7 News and forthcoming events

17 Inside Bonhams
Louise Arén, CEO of Bukowskis in Sweden tells **Lucinda Bredin** about the auction house's digital transformation and being part of the Bonhams network

61 Wine
You know your dear old friend Rioja, says **Margaret Rand**, isn't he looking *really* handsome these days?

62 Travel
The Rijksmuseum's Vermeer is spectacular. Just go, says **Lucinda Bredin**

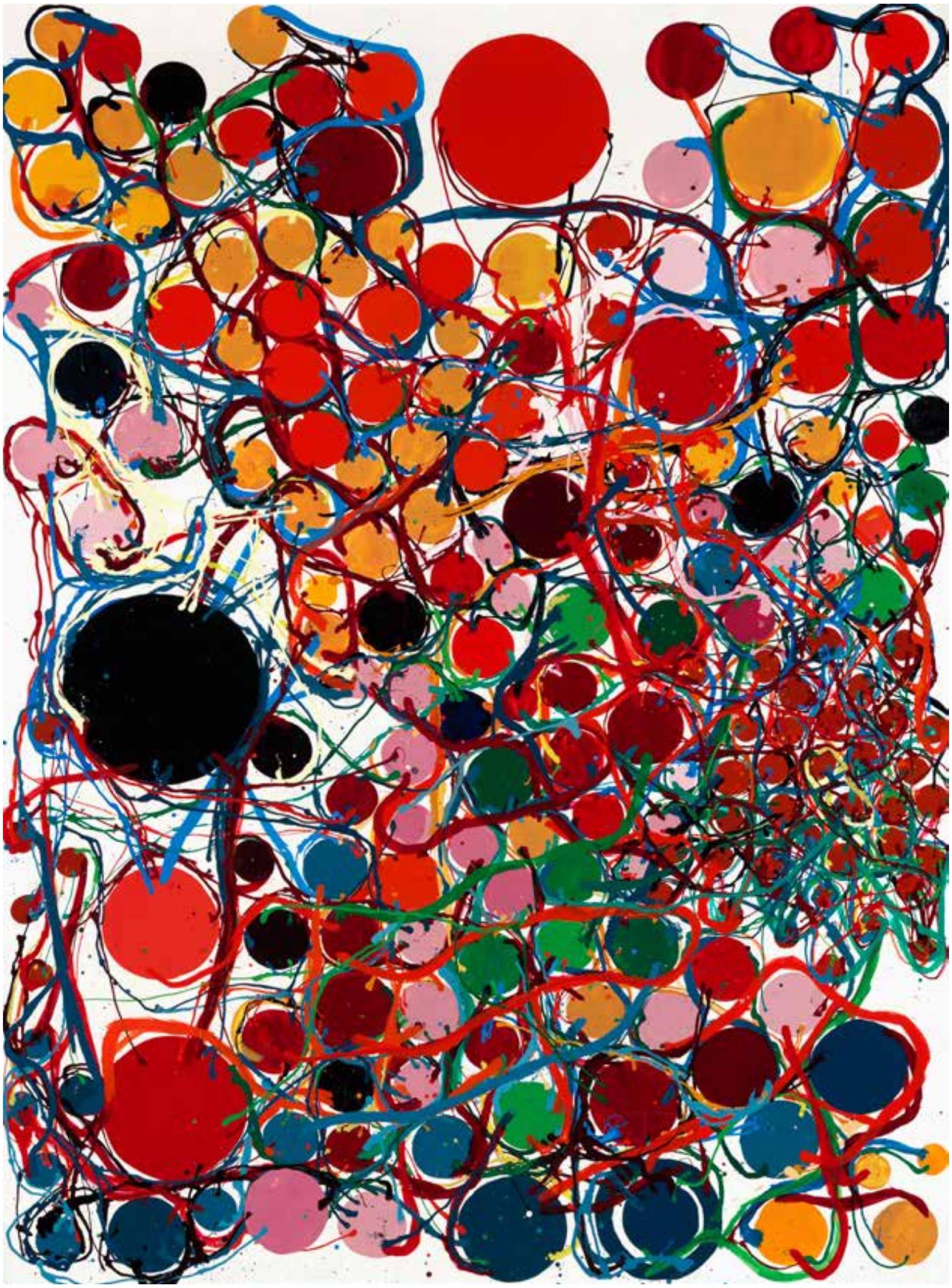
65 Around the globe

70 International directory

72 My favourite room
Sir Jackie Stewart

Front cover
Liu Dan (born 1953)
Old Cypress from the Forbidden City, 2007
(detail)
Estimate: £200,000 - 300,000
($250,000 - 400,000)

Sale: Michael Goedhuis: Brush and Bronze
London | Thursday 18 May
See page 28



Modern Paintings, Sculptures & Prints

Bruun Rasmussen, Copenhagen
Tuesday 7 March
5pm

Atsuko Tanaka (1932-2005)
Untitled, 1966
Signed Atsuko Tanaka and dated on the reverse.
Vinyl paint on canvas.
130 x 97cm (51 x 38in)
Estimate: 4,000,000 - 6,000,000 DKK
($570,000 - 850,000)

Enquiries: Niels Raben
+ 45 8818 1181
nr@bruun-rasmussen.dk
bruun-rasmussen.dk/

Editor's letter

Are you stronger together? Judging from this issue, it depends on whom your partner is. Take the case of Max Ernst and Marie-Berthe Aurenche. Ernst met Marie-Berthe when he was nudging 40 and, as Mark Hudson describes on page 32, "on the rebound from a bruising ménage à trois with the poet Paul Éluard and his wife Gala – later Mrs Salvador Dalí". Aurenche was, ahem, some years younger – a vivacious 19-year-old convent school dropout with a wilful streak, who was hanging around the Surrealist scene. What could possibly go wrong?

Well… Ernst and Marie-Berthe married soon after they met, yet within two years Ernst was similarly entranced by another young woman. It was a pattern that was to continue. The one thing to be said in Ernst's favour was that he did encourage his partners to paint and collaborate on works with him. One example is the portrait of André Breton (to be offered in Paris on 29 March) that has recently been confirmed as a joint creation. However, unlike Ernst's other conquests – Méret Oppenheim and Leonor Fini, to name but two – Marie-Berthe hardly made the footnotes. Tormented by Ernst's affairs, she began a steady decline, and like a number of other female artists was all but erased from history – with the painting of Breton attributed solely to Ernst. Until now. With a move to re-evaluate and draw the spotlight on to unfairly overlooked female artists, Marie-Berthe Aurenche is once more accredited with a leading contribution to one of the finest portraits of the Surrealist leader.

Another tortured scenario is the infamous love triangle between John Ruskin, John Everett Millais and Effie Gray. Oh dear. Five years after her marriage to Ruskin, Effie admitted to Millais that their union was still unconsummated. At least this story ended happily, with Effie and Millais running off and producing their daughter, a portrait of whom is on page 25. After the annulment, Ruskin did not marry again, but did produce superlative watercolours, which, according to the art historian Christopher Newall, are perhaps an expression of Ruskin's sublimated desires.

One of the many joyous things a couple can do is to create a collection together. Mary and Cheney Cowles have been acquiring Asian art for more than 40 years, and celebrated their collection with a gift of some 550 Japanese paintings, calligraphy and ceramics to institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On page 56, Emma Crichton-Miller writes about a selection of their lifetime's collection offered at Bonhams New York. It's a testament to an enduring partnership.

Lucinda Bredin

Contributors

Serena Fokschaner

Serena Fokschaner has written about design for publications including *The Sunday Times, Observer, Financial Times* and *House & Garden*, interviewing actors, architects, florists and even an Elvis-loving duchess along the way. Here she visits Peta Smyth (page 48), whose extraordinary collection of antique textiles kept interior designers coming to her shop for decades.

Frank L. Holt

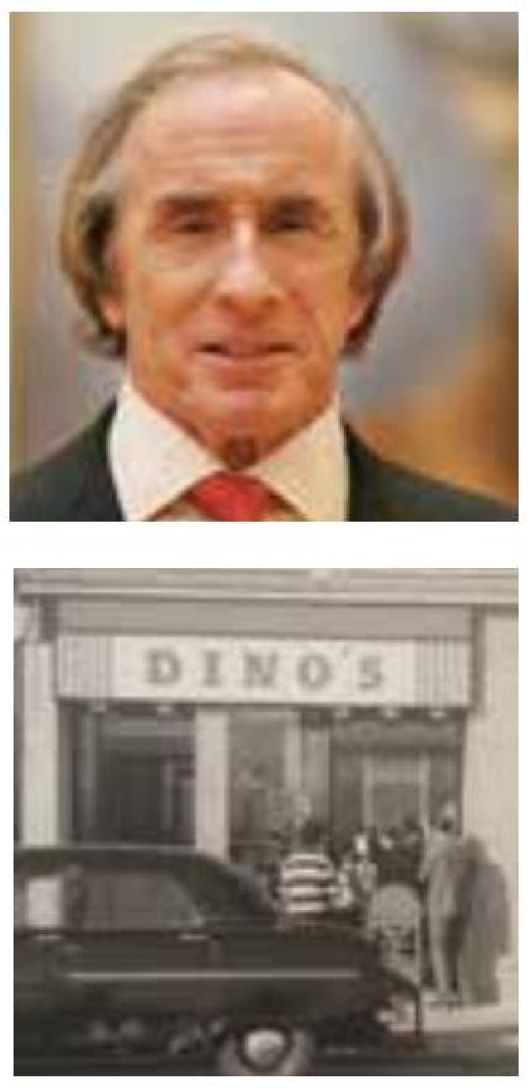
Professor Frank Holt, who teaches at the University of Houston, is one of the world's leading authorities on Alexander the Great, Hellenistic Asia and numismatics. His most recent book, *When Money Talks: A History of Coins and Numismatics* (2021), prepared him well for discussing an extraordinary Roman coin on page 20. His forthcoming book will tackle the mummy-pits of Egypt (2023).

Michele Chan

With a Masters in Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths University, London, Michele Chan has written articles and reviews published in *Frieze, Art Asia Pacific* and *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*. On page 42, Michele talks to Doryun Chong, the curator of a blockbuster exhibition focusing on the work of Yayoi Kusama at Hong Kong's M+ gallery.

Emma Crichton-Miller

Emma Crichton-Miller is an arts writer, specialising in fine art, craft and design. She writes a monthly column for *Apollo* on the art market and is founding editor of online magazine *The Design Edit*. She published the book *The Pottery of John Ward* in 2022. In this issue (page 56), Emma writes on exquisite Ming dynasty furniture carved from rare pear wood.



Jackie Stewart

The legendary racing driver Sir Jackie Stewart was world champion three times (1969, 1971, 1973) in just nine Formula One seasons. Known as the 'Flying Scot', his helmet bore a tartan stripe. His career began in his father's garage – not far from his romantic favourite room (page 72) – and he went on to commentate on both motor sport and the Summer Olympics.

Follow us on Twitter: **@bonhams1793;** email: **press@bonhams.com**

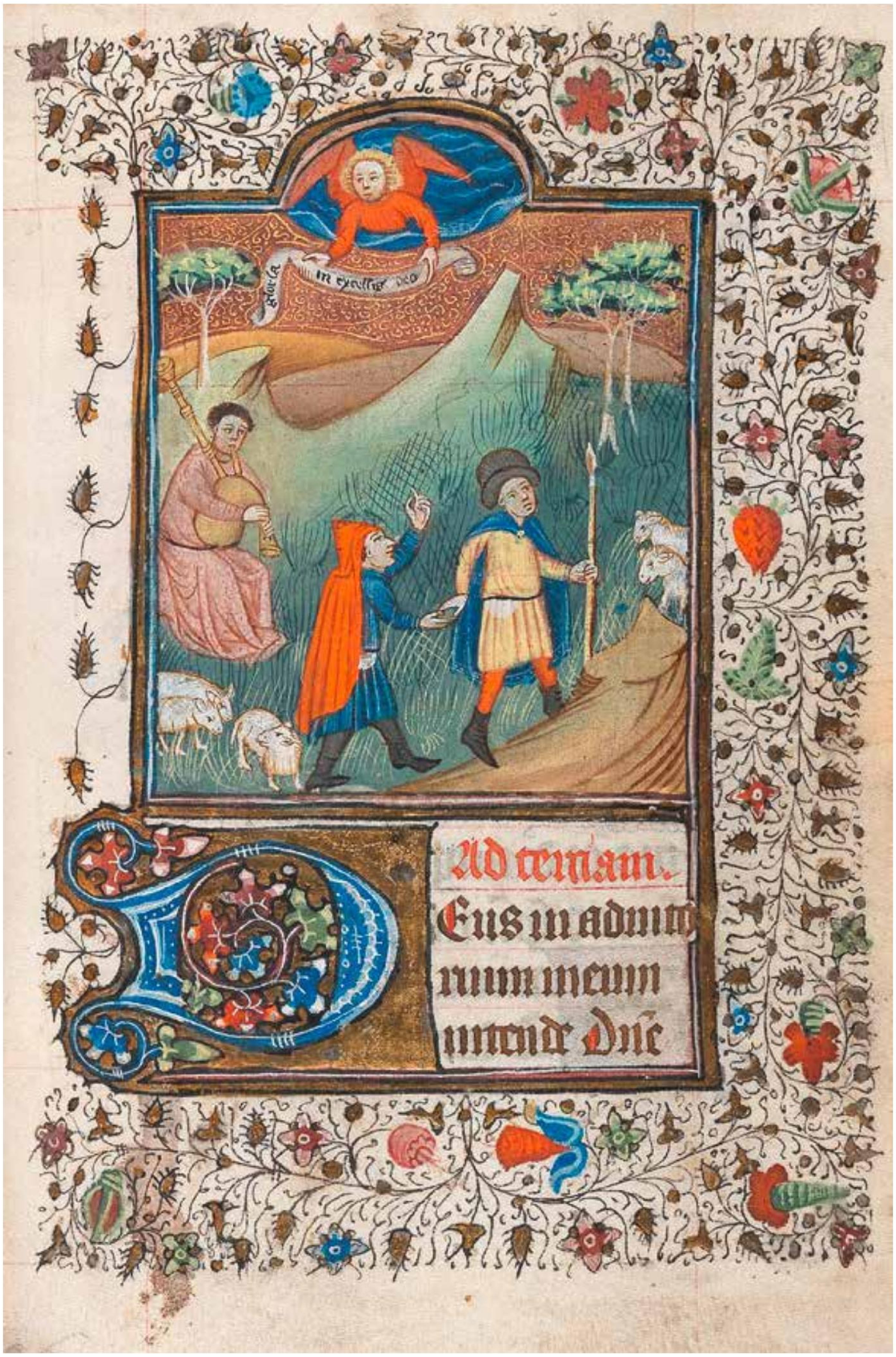
Editor Lucinda Bredin **Editorial** Andrew Currie, Sasha Thomas, Lynnie Farrant, Hannah Daniells-Conroy **Copy Editor** Simon Coppock **Designer** Nathan Brown **Assistant Designer** Cristina Santos **Photographs** Bonhams Photography **Advertising Enquiries** Renata@parkwalkmedia.com **Published** four times a year by Bonhams 1793 Ltd, 101 New Bond Street, London W1S 1SR **Subscription** (four issues) £25 for the UK, £30 for Europe or £35 for the rest of the world, inclusive of postage. **Subscription Enquiries** Linda Pellett, Bonhams +44 (0) 1666 502 200; ISSN 1745-2643. Issue 74 © Bonhams 1793 Ltd, 2021. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted by any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of Bonhams. All dates are correct at the time of publication. All sales are subject to Bonhams Terms & Conditions. Sale dates may be subject to alteration. Currency exchange rates correct at the time of publication. **bonhams.com.** Should you no longer wish to receive this magazine, please contact linda.pellett@bonhams.com

Fine Books and Manuscripts

Knightsbridge, London
Wednesday 29 March
1pm

Illuminated Book of Hours, use of Rome
Manuscript on vellum with 13 large arch-topped miniatures
Flanders, probably Bruges, mid-15th century
Estimate: £25,000 - 35,000
($30,000 - 42,000)

Enquiries: Simon Roberts
+44 (0) 20 7393 3834
simon.roberts@bonhams.com



News

In and out of Bonhams' salerooms

SIR TERENCE CONRAN
THE CONTENTS OF BARTON COURT

Victoria, Lady Conran, with Harvey Cammell

Lizzie Shaw and Andrew Robb

Sam Williams and Adam Bennett

Nicholas and Alexandra Foulkes

Marjorie Bowden

Valentina Randal, Charlie and Kate Thomas, and Louis Randal

Rita Benson LeBlanc

James Curzon

✳

Design for living

The late Sir Terence Conran is regarded as a national treasure. So it was no surprise that Bonhams' preview for the sale of his personal collection was a sought-after ticket. Every inch of the room was hung with Conran's art and design collection, including a wall of miniature Bugattis, murals by Allen Jones from Mezzo, one of Conran's restaurants, and a model aeroplane that skimmed over people's head. Never has a crowd been so eager to paint the town Conran blue.

Victoria, Lady Conran, was in attendance, surrounded by admirers who wanted to talk about her late husband's incredible legacy. The excitement carried through to the auction, with the collection achieving more than three times its pre-sale estimate. Unsurprisingly, it was also 'white glove' – 100 per cent sold – with lucky buyers taking home a piece of Conran's habitat.

FIN-AOUT A MI-JUIN

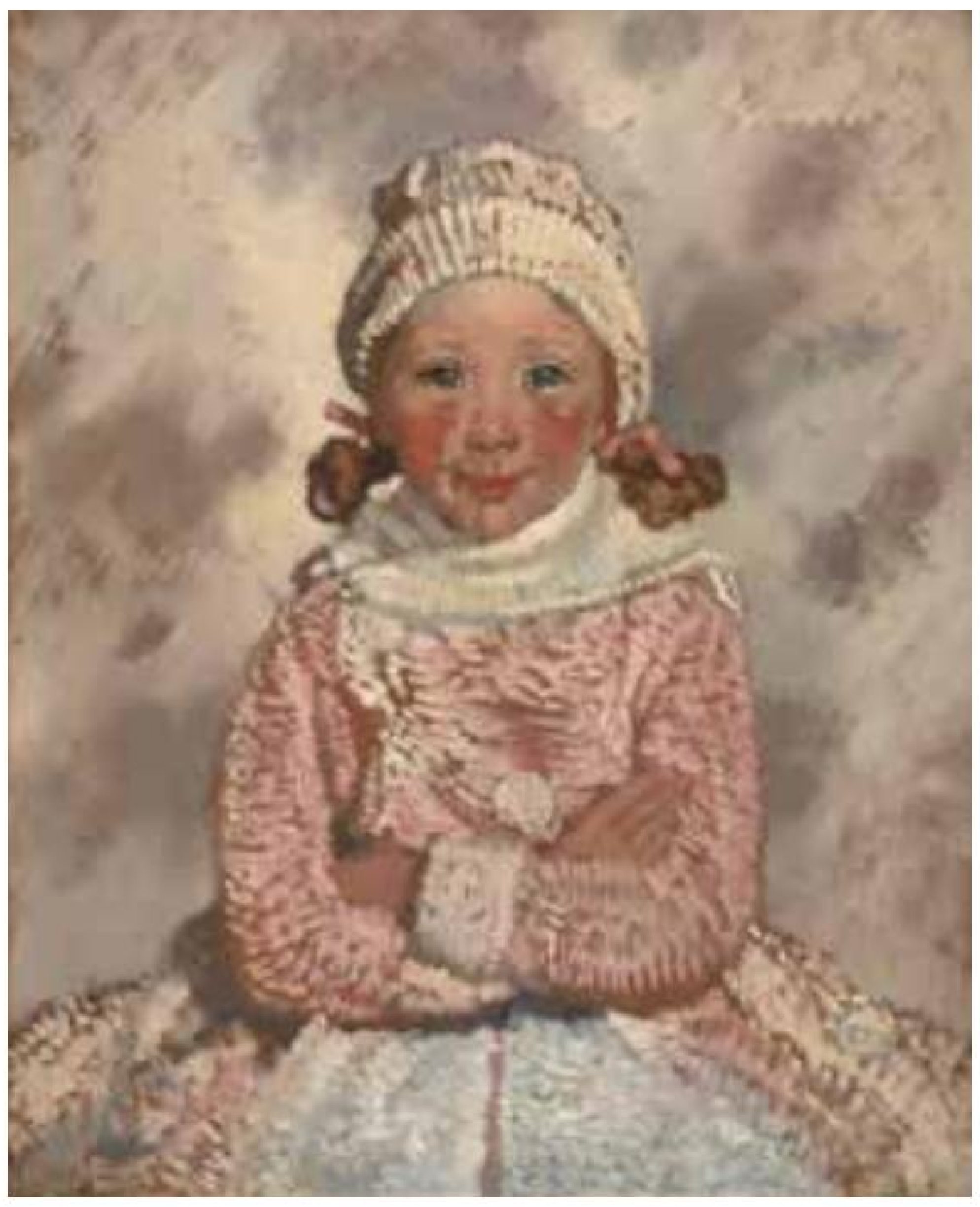
JANE GRAVEROL 1959

La Révolution Surréaliste

Bonhams Cornette de Saint Cyr, Paris
Wednesday 29 March
2pm

Jane Graverol (1905-1984)
Le Trait de Lumière, 1959
oil on masonite
80 x 60cm (31½ x 23¾in)
Estimate: €35,000 - 55,000
($37,000 - 60,000)

Enquiries: Emilie Millon
+33 1 42 61 10 10
emilie.millon@bonhams.com



Read all about it

Few newspapers have their own art collection – even fewer one as interesting as that of *The Irish News*, Northern Ireland's largest selling morning newspaper. The collection was formed over 40 years by the late Jim Fitzpatrick, former owner of the *News*, and features Irish and English art from the 19th century to the modern day. Thirty works are now offered at 'Vision & Voice – the Irish Sale', to be held in Dublin later this year and the first stand-alone Bonhams' sale ever held on the island of Ireland. Among the highlights is a portrait by Sir William Orpen (1878-1931) of his daughter Christine, universally known as Kit. *Portrait of Kit* – estimated at €80,000-120,000 – was painted in 1912, when she was six. Other artists represented include Margaret Clarke, Harry Kernoff, William Conor, Frank McKelvey, John Behan and Maeve McCarthy.

Enquiries: Kieran O'Boyle
+353 1602 0990
kieran.oboyle@bonhams.com

Mark Crompton and Robert Turner

Hot press

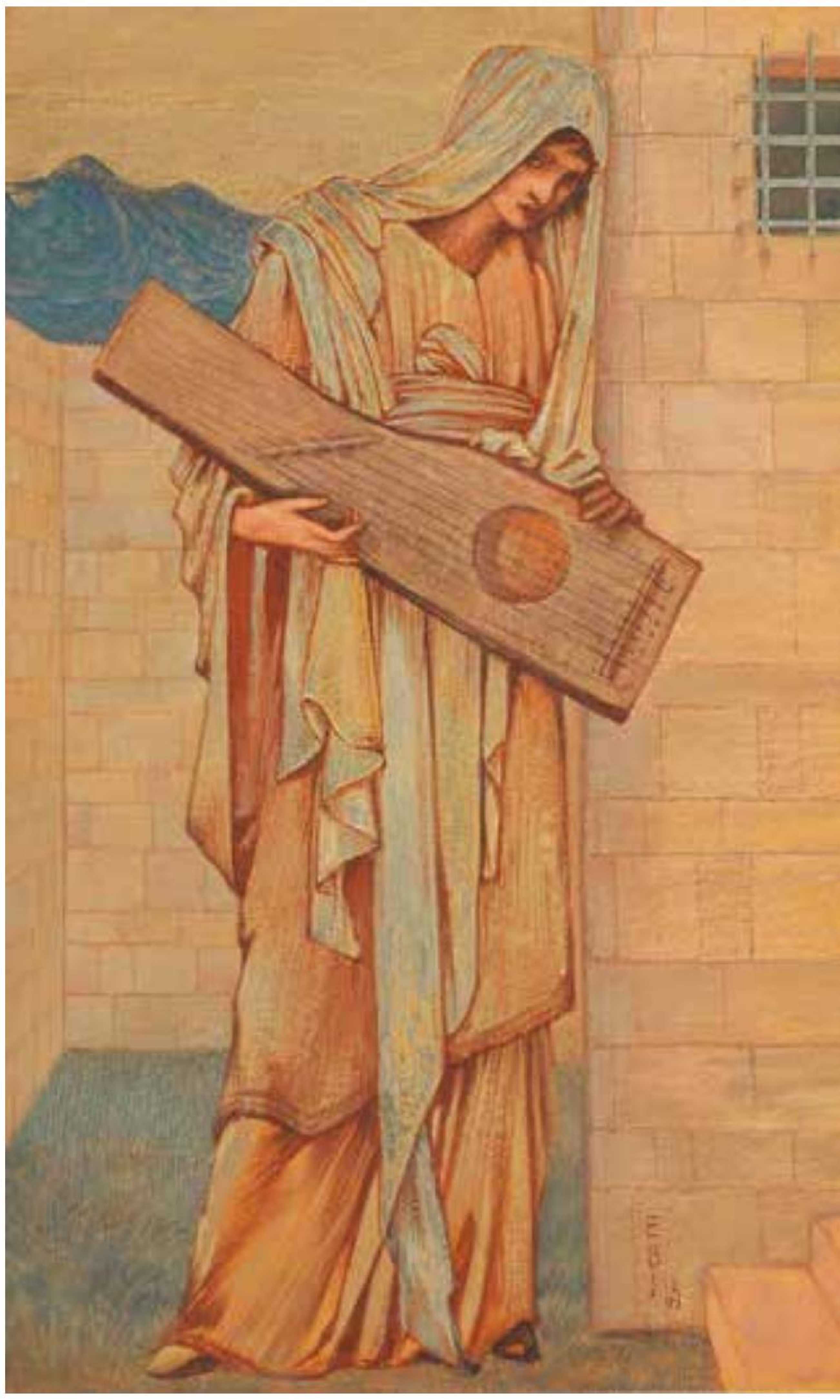
For the December Prints and Multiples sale in Knightsbridge, Bonhams partnered with Jealous Gallery and the artist Adam Bridgland. As well as offering some of his wonderful works as part of the auction, Adam treated crowds at our late-night preview to a glimpse behind the creative curtain – with a live screen-printing performance that involved lots of glitter. An illuminating panel discussion followed. Those at the party were able to leave with their own specially created print, making it a glittering night that they will always remember.

Mark and Maria Timperley

Sean Nishihara

Dario Illari, Carolin von Massenbach and Adam Bridgland

Kirsty Dougan and Neil Galloway



Souls man

Sometimes the backstory of a work of art can be as fascinating as the piece is magnificent. This is true of the 1896 Burne-Jones study *The Answering String*, which is to be offered in the 19th Century Paintings sale in London in March. It links leading politicians, high society and the late 19th-century upper-class intellectual grouping known as 'The Souls', whose de facto leader was future prime minister A.J. Balfour. The work was part of the preparation for Burne-Jones's *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, but was not, in the event, used in his finished masterpiece. Frances Horner, a great friend of the artist and fellow member of the Souls, recognising its superb quality, bought *The Answering String* at the auction of Burne-Jones's studio after his death in 1898. It hung in Mells Manor in Somerset, the family seat since the 16th century of her husband John Horner. The Horners' eldest daughter Katherine married Raymond Asquith, son of Prime Minister H.H. Asquith; Raymond's stepmother Margot Asquith was another prominent Soul. On John Horner's death, Katherine inherited Mells Manor and the Burne-Jones study, which has been in the family ever since.

Enquiries: Peter Rees
+44 (0) 20 7468 8201
peter.rees@bonhams.com

Post-War & Contemporary Art

London
Thursday 16 March
4pm

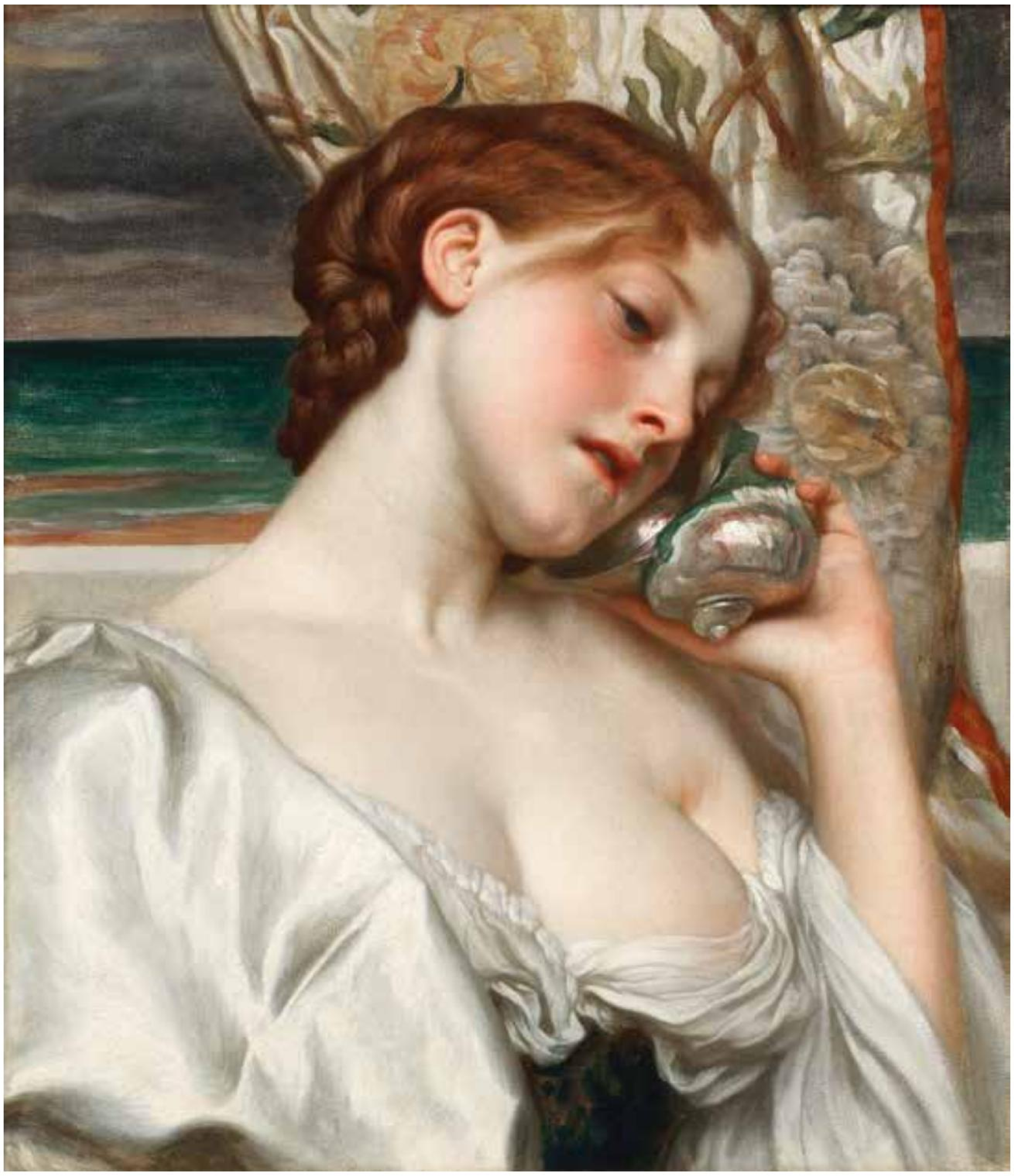
Frank Auerbach (b. 1931)
J.Y.M. Seated V, 1989
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16in)
Estimate: £400,000 - 600,000
($500,000 - 700,000)

Enquiries: Irene Sieberger
+44 (0) 20 7468 5873
irene.sieberger@bonhams.com

✯ A sense for the new

In the early 1860s, the painter Frederic Leighton was seeking a new source of inspiration. His narrative paintings of the mid-1850s, which had proved so popular, were losing their market appeal. Drawing on his knowledge of developments in French art – he'd lived in Paris before establishing himself in London in 1859 – Leighton began to explore a new and personal style. The storytelling that had dominated his work was replaced by figurative compositions that depended entirely on mood. *Sea Echoes* from 1861, which is to be offered at Bonhams 19th Century and British Impressionist Art Sale in London in March, is a triumphant – and thoroughly sensuous – early example of his mastery of what came to be known as Aestheticism. Leighton had the skill and confidence to work in a way that was naturalistic and unstilted, with rich colours and freedom of handling that made his pictures fresh and spontaneous. Untraced since 1960, this important rediscovery is designed to give pleasure to the viewer, and represents a radical departure from the solemn realities of previous generations of British Victorian painters. It is estimated at £250,000-350,000.

Enquiries: Charles O'Brien
+44 (0) 20 7468 8360
charles.o'brien@bonhams.com

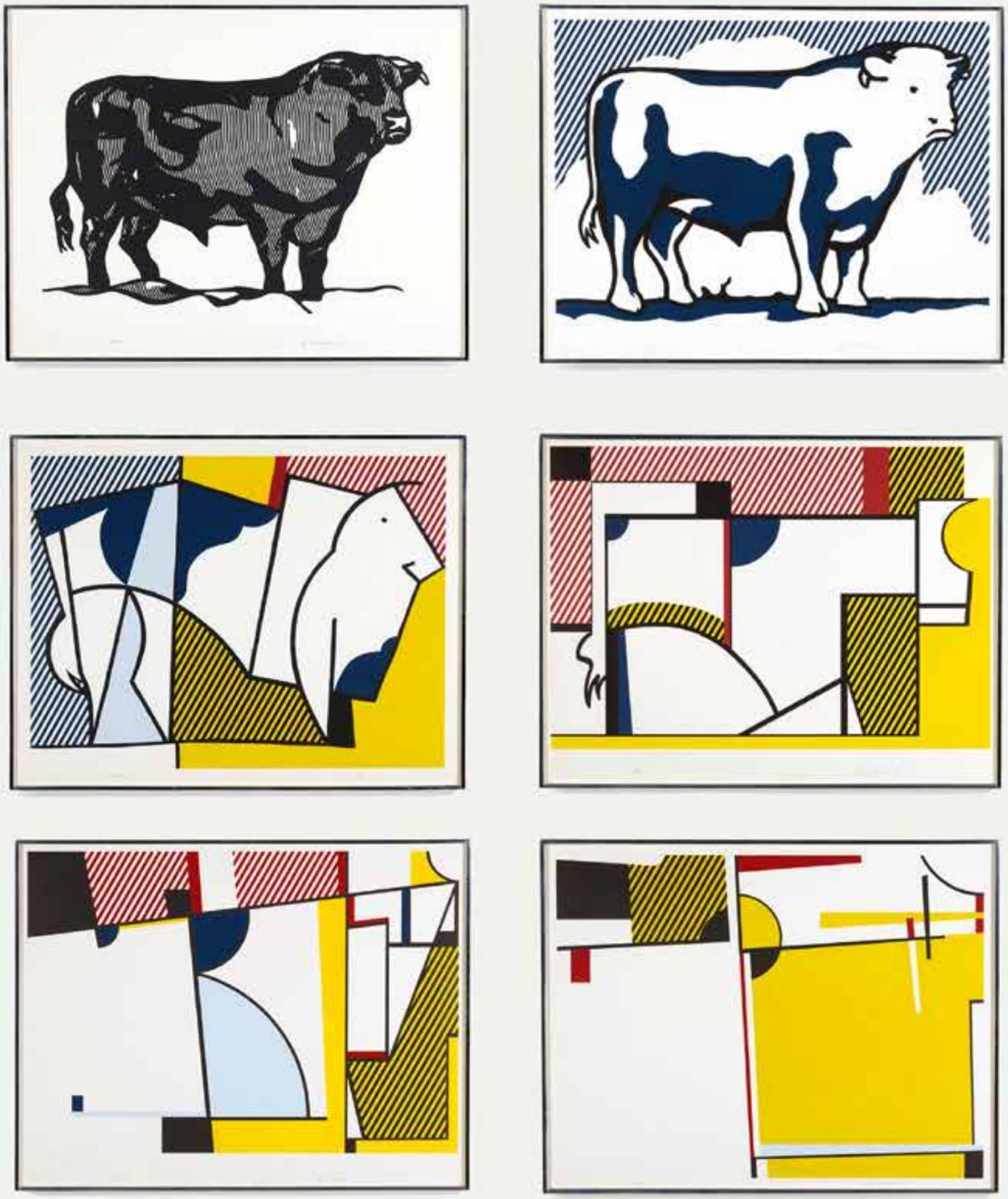


✯ Jaguar hunt

It's not every day that a lost Jaguar comes to light, so there's something special in the air when five of them turn up at once. The Thomas Hendricks Collection – which also boasts a Jaguar-powered Lister and an MG – has been secreted away just outside Washington DC for more than 20 years. The late Thomas Hendricks was a Jaguar man through and through, inheriting his passion for the marque from his father, and going on to chair the prestigious Nation's Capital Jaguar Owners Club. Pride of place in his collection – to be offered at Amelia Island Florida in early March – goes to the very rare LT3, one of only three lightweight aluminium racing versions of the XK120C Jaguar. Built as a fallback in case the C Type wasn't ready in time for the 1951 Le Mans, these motor cars were not needed in the end, but went on to earn glory in their own right. With the legendary Phil Hill at the wheel, LT3 raced successfully across the US. This exceptionally important piece of Jaguar history has never been restored, and was last seen in public in 2001.

Enquiries: Rupert Banner
+1 212 461 6515
rupert.banner@bonhams.com

Hill Family Archive



Prints & Multiples

Los Angeles
Tuesday 28 March
10am

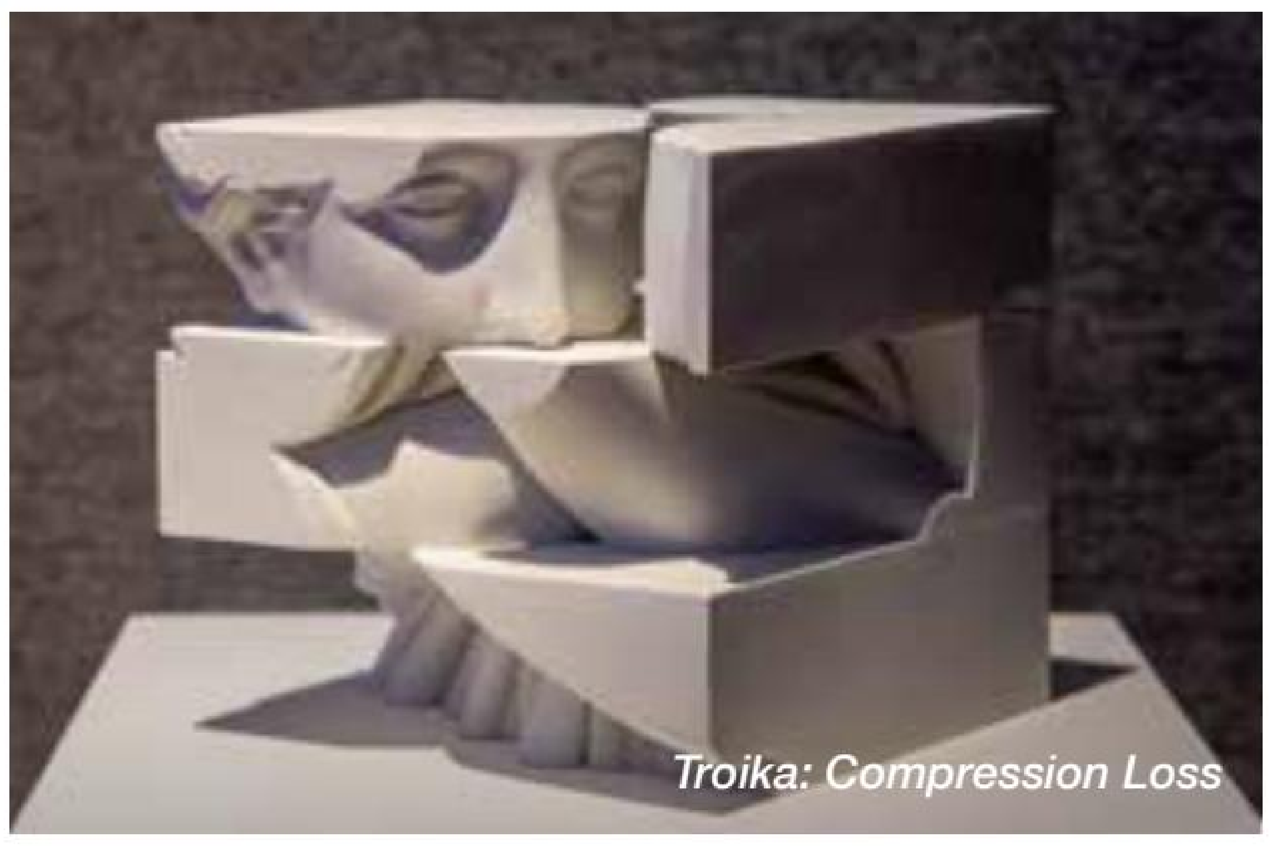
Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997)
Bull Profile Series, 1973
The complete set of 6 lithograph, screenprint and line-cuts
68.6 x 88.9cm (27 x 35in) each
Estimate: $100,000 - 150,000
(£80,000 - 120,000)

Enquiries: Morisa Rosenberg
+1 (323) 436 5435
morisa.rosenberg@bonhams.com

Susie Allen and Laura Culpan of Artwise

Paul Huxley

Ron Arad


Troika: Compression Loss

Lothar Götz

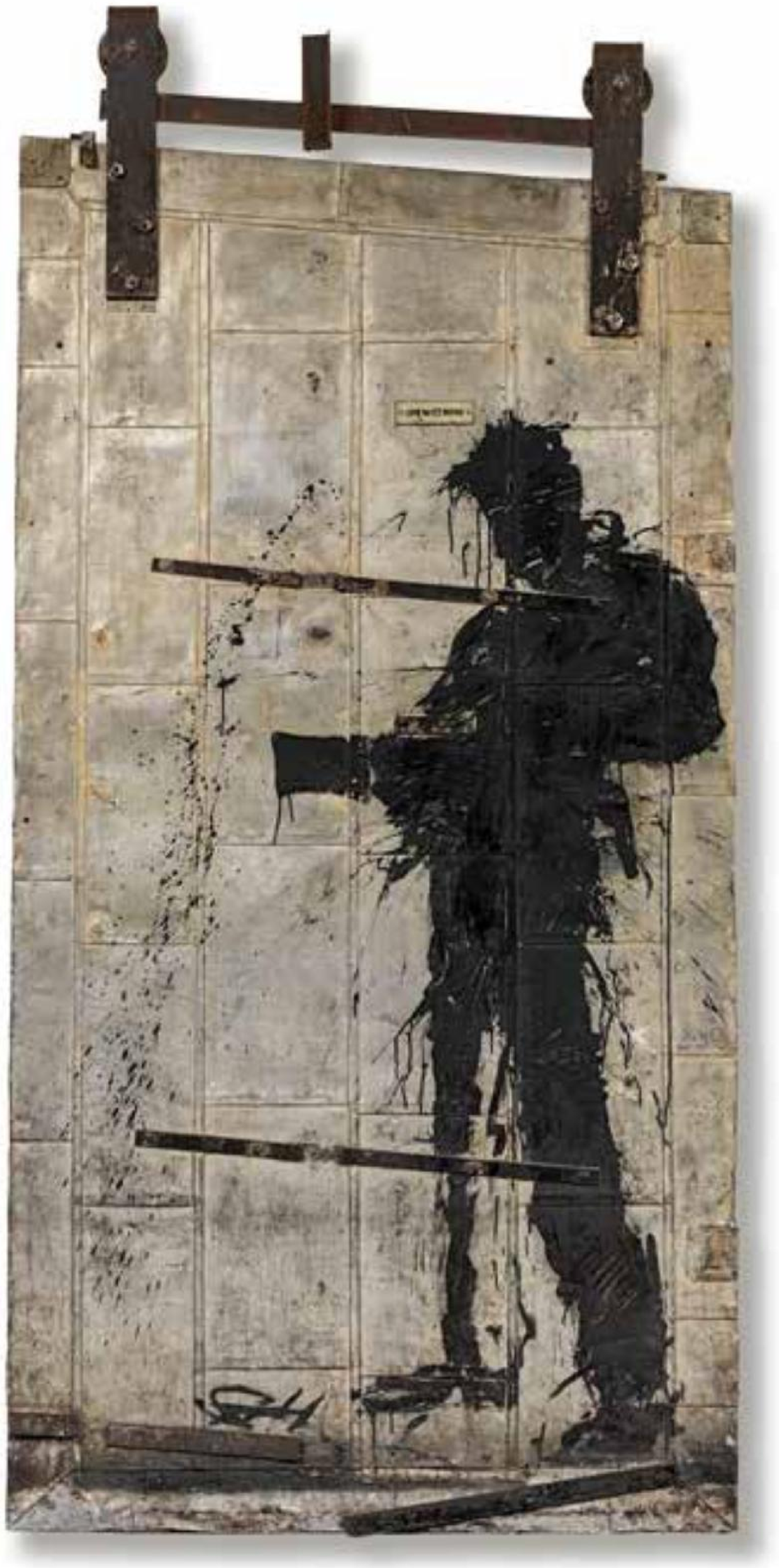
Cure^3

In January, Bonhams once again partnered with Cure Parkinson and Artwise on the fourth edition of Cure^3 – the critically acclaimed selling exhibition devised to raise awareness and funds for curative Parkinson's research. The exhibition preview saw the saleroom packed with supporters and collectors, who snapped up work by artists including Tracey Emin, Idris Khan and Frank Bowling. On the night itself, more than £470,000 was raised in sales – of which almost half was made up of sales of NFTs, making their first Cure^3 appearance. The event raised a total of £700,000.

Out of the shadows

Soon after gallerist Hong Gyu Shin opened his New York gallery in 2013, a man on a small bicycle took to stopping by for a chat shortly before closing time. He had strong views, loathed the art world and claimed to have pioneered street art before Keith Haring and Basquiat. This man was the Canadian artist Richard Hambleton – who could, indeed, claim to be 'the Godfather of Street Art'. One evening, he told Shin that he'd lost his studio and needed a place to work. And so it was that Hambleton began to work in Shin's gallery at night. Every evening, the staff took down the artworks to clear a space; every morning, they reinstalled them. A wonderful reminder of this bizarre arrangement comes to the Post-War and Contemporary Art sale in London in March. Consigned by Hong Gyu Shin himself, *Standing Shadowman Profile II* – executed in acrylic on a steel door – is a late example of one of Hambleton's best-known creations: life-sized crime-scene silhouettes. Startling and intriguing passersby in equal measure, he painted these all over the world – in the street, down dark alleys, even on the Berlin Wall.

Enquiries: Irene Sieberger
+44 (0) 20 7468 5873
irene.sieberger@bonhams.com



Sabine Mund with Donatienne and Christophe Lenaerts

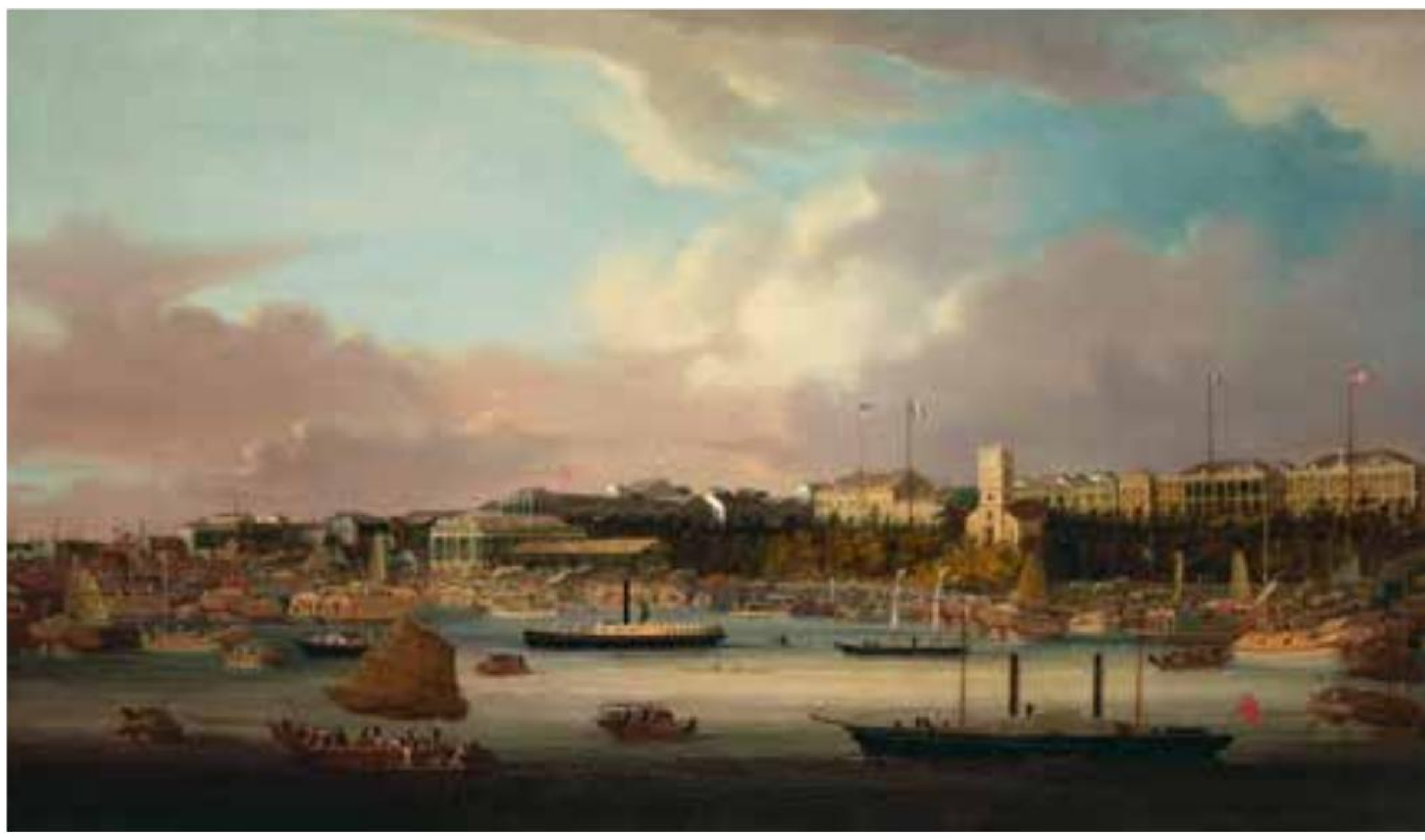
Thrill of the Chaussée

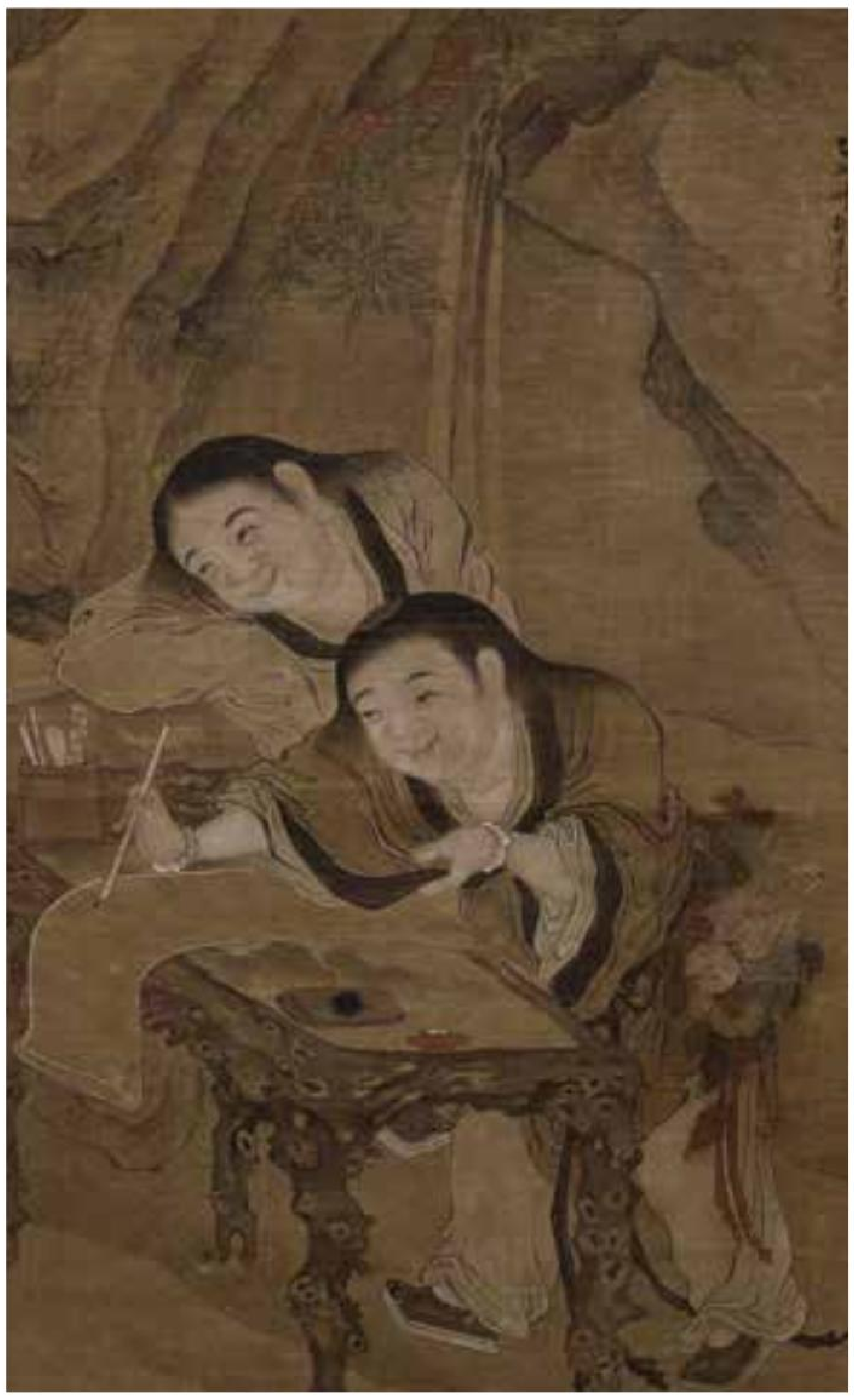
Wilfrid Vacher, Christine de Schaetzen and the team from Brussels had a party at Bonhams Cornette in Chaussée de Charleroi to preview a sale of CoBrA paintings that were offered by Bruun Rasmussen in Copenhagen in December. The design pieces from the Brussels auction were also exhibited in the 19th-century *hôtel particulier* built by Émile Janlet in 1888. The saleroom was filled with more than 150 collectors and curators from Belgium, Luxembourg, and France, as well as representatives from across Europe, including Bonhams' colleagues from Bruun Rasmussen.

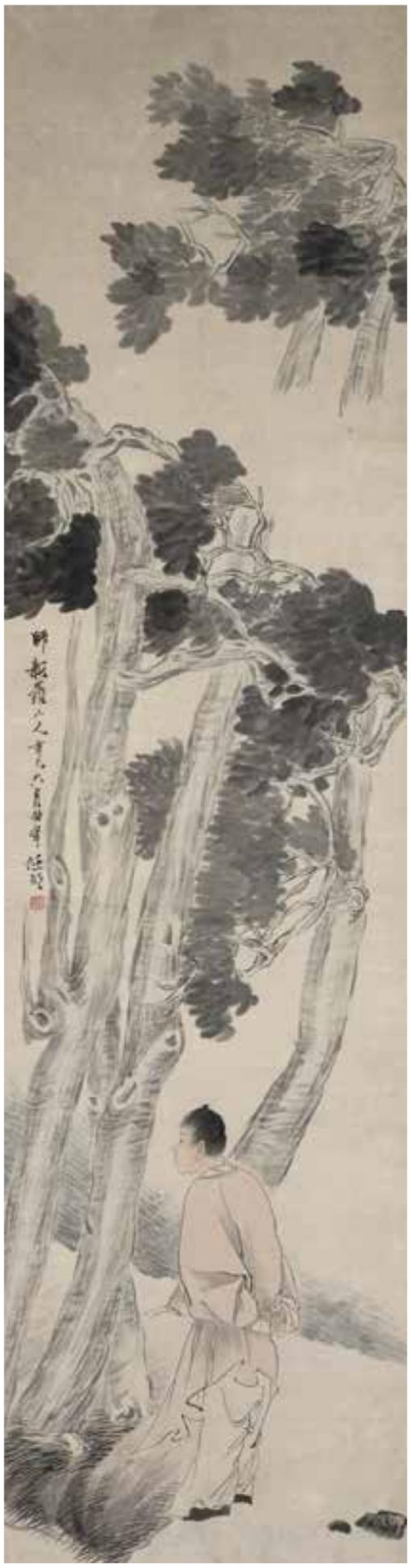
Wilfrid Vacher and Christine de Schaetzen

Into Asia

Andrew Currie has the highlights from all the auctions in New York Asia Week

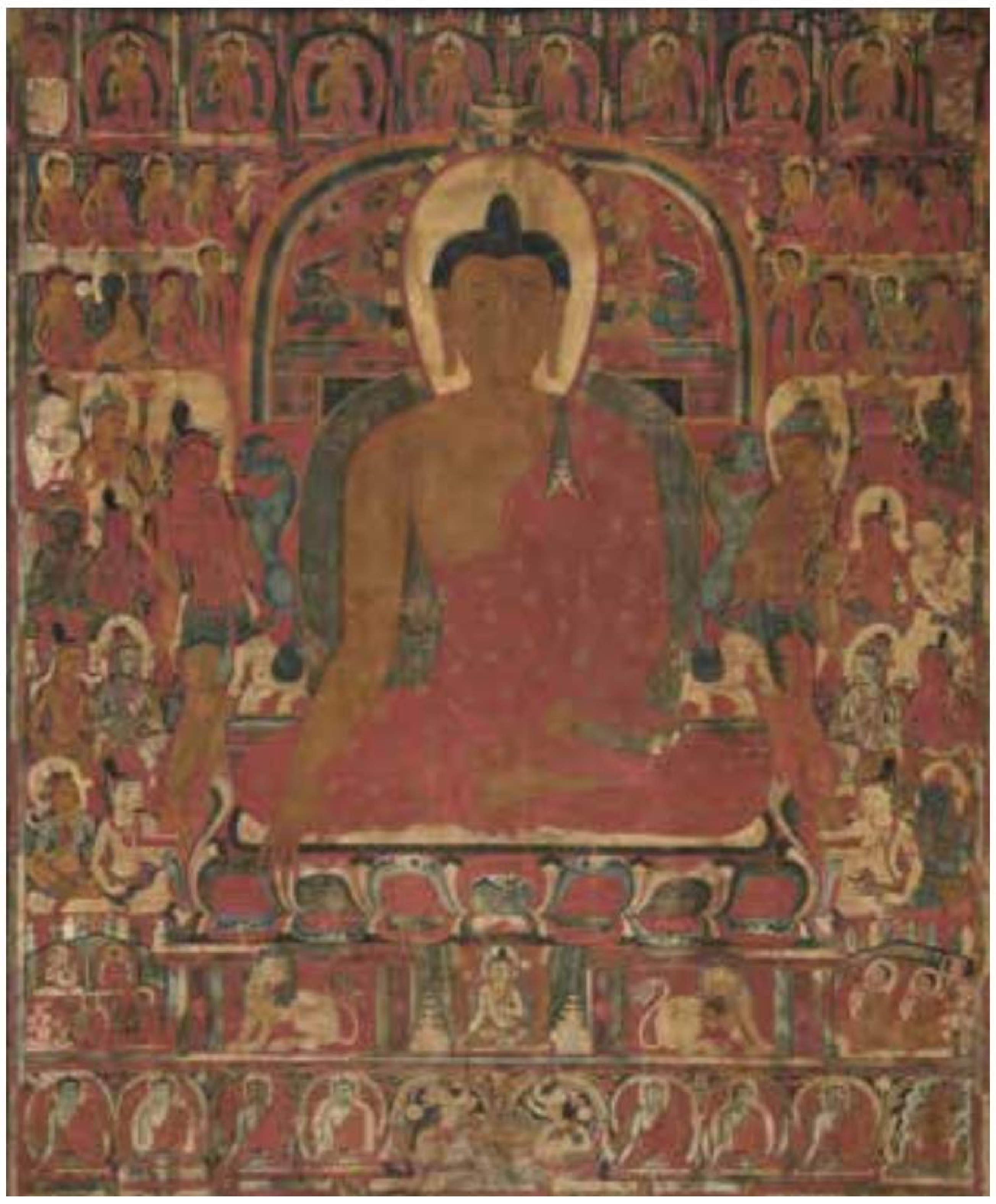






Asia Week in New York in March is rich with promise, featuring important single-owner collections such the **Cowles Collection**, featured on page 56, and works of art that hail from right across the continent and span centuries. James Lally – known to all as Jim – has been active in the Chinese art market for more than 50 years, the last 35 of them as owner of the J.J. Lally & Co. gallery in New York. His connoisseurship, meticulous cataloguing and research have earned him a distinguished reputation among scholars, educators and collectors. Jim has, throughout his career, prided himself on searching out cherished works for collectors at every price point, and this approach is reflected in the selection of pieces to be offered in the **J.J. Lally & Co. Fine Chinese Works of Art** sale on **20 March**. Pieces range from the Neolithic period to the Qing dynasty, and there is a strong focus on jades and silver, including a rare chased silver 'Literary Gathering' pictorial tray from the Song dynasty (estimate: $30,000-50,000) and a wonderful Qianlong period jade carving of a pair of magpies (estimate: $10,000-15,000).

The **Chinese Works of Art and Paintings** sale on **20-21 March** features two important paintings. *View of the Foreign Factories* by an unknown artist of the Canton School (estimate: $100,000-150,000) shows the Foreign Factories in Guangdong with the American, French, British and Danish flags denoting each nation's site. (Despite the name, these building complexes functioned more as warehouses and temporary residences than as working factories.) The second painting is also estimated at $100,000-150,000: *Figures in a Landscape* is a set of four hanging scrolls painted in 1881 by Ren Yi (1840-1895). One of the 'Four Rens' (each artist bearing the same family name), Ren Yi was a leading light of the late 19th-century Shanghai School, and a celebrated member of a flourishing art market in a dynamic and cosmopolitan city.

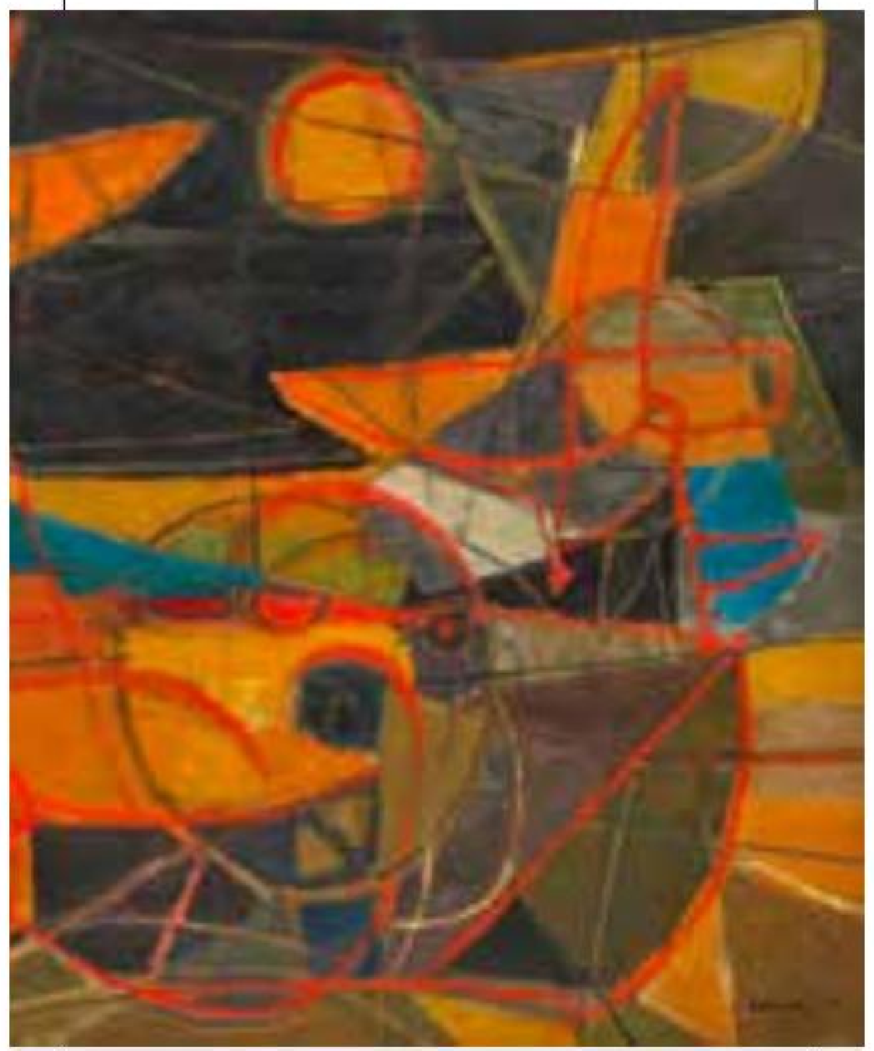


The **Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art** sale on **21 March** is led by a magnificent, very rare and notably large 12th-century thangka (estimate on request). Although the figure of Buddha is, as usual, surrounded by other deities, they are not in the customary palace setting. From the famed collection of Swiss art historian and scholar Michael Henss, this is probably the oldest 12th-century thangka still in existence and it is in superb condition. The sale also features an early 14th-century thangka, which gives an aerial view of a palace, and a 15th-century thangka from the collection of the respected Tibet scholar Giuseppe Tucci.

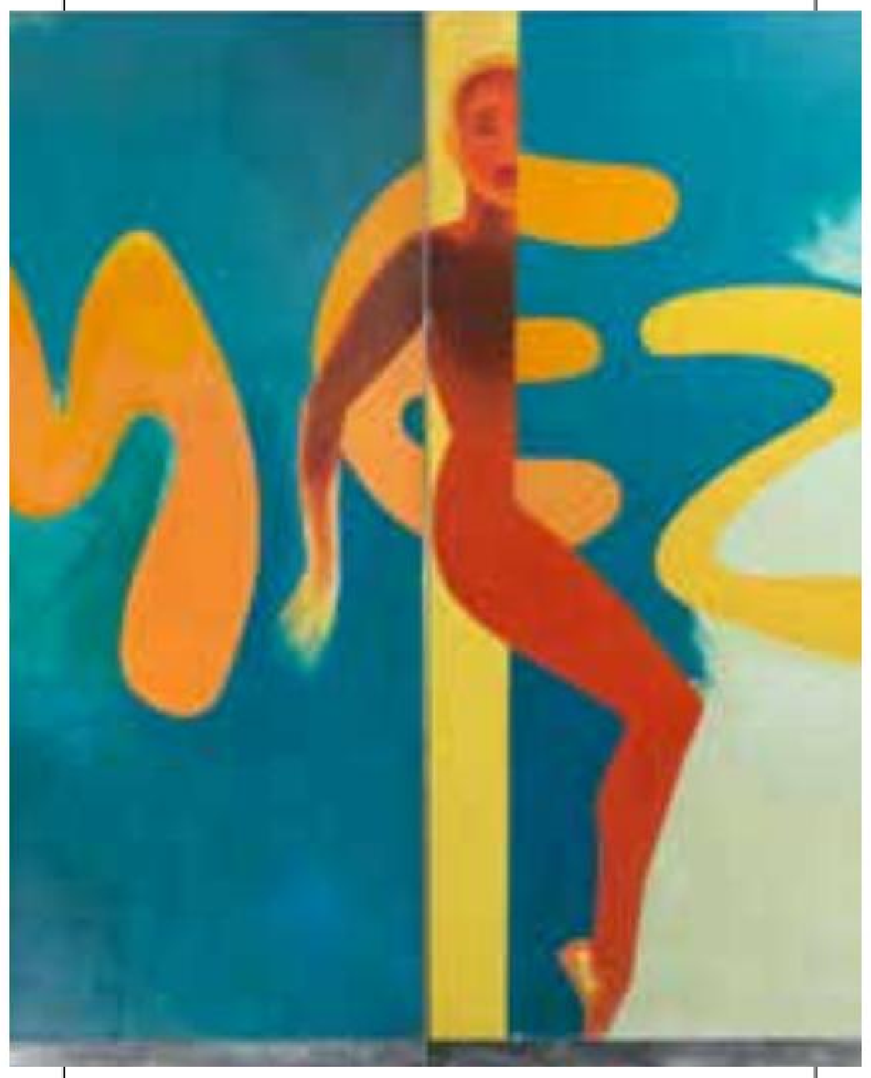
The **Fine Chinese Snuff Bottles from American Collections** sale on **21 March** offers a further selection from the Joan and Ted Dorf Collection, following last year's successful sale. It covers a wide variety of materials and formats – jade, glass, hardstone, porcelain and inside-painted bottles among them – and includes a 'Flowers and Butterflies' snuff bottle with Imperial Blue overlay on 'Snowflake' glass, attributed to the Palace Workshops, Beijing, in 1750-1800. The sale also offers Part II of the Kim Green Collection: 30 carefully selected pieces, from elegant bottles of Imperial glass of the Kangxi period to refined porcelain examples from the Republic period.

Fine Japanese and Korean Works of Art on **22 March** includes a very special private collection of 25 contemporary Japanese ceramics, starring some of the most sought-after artists. Titled 'Form, Color, and Texture of East Asia', the collection is exemplified by a stunning 6ft-tall sculpture by Kyoto artist Fukami Sueharu (estimate: $70,000-100,000). Also featured in the sale, estimated at $200,000-300,000, is a particularly rare 7th-century gilt-bronze figure of Miruk Bosal (Miroku Bodhisattva), the future Buddha and one of the most-famous deities.

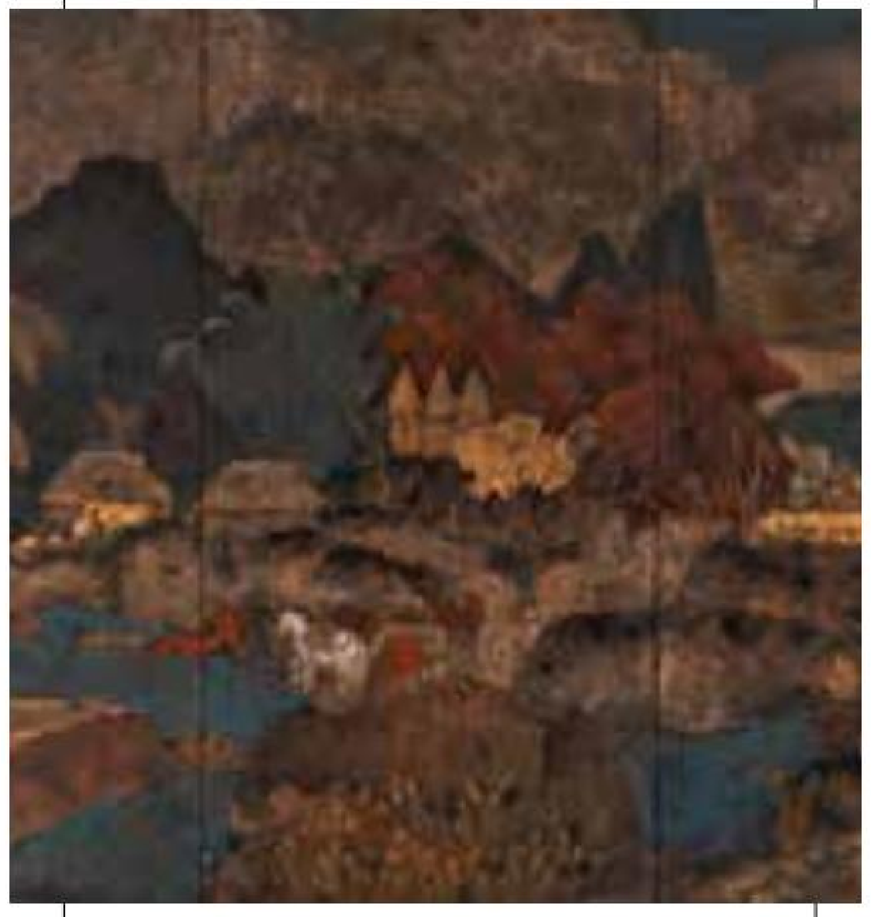
What happened next...



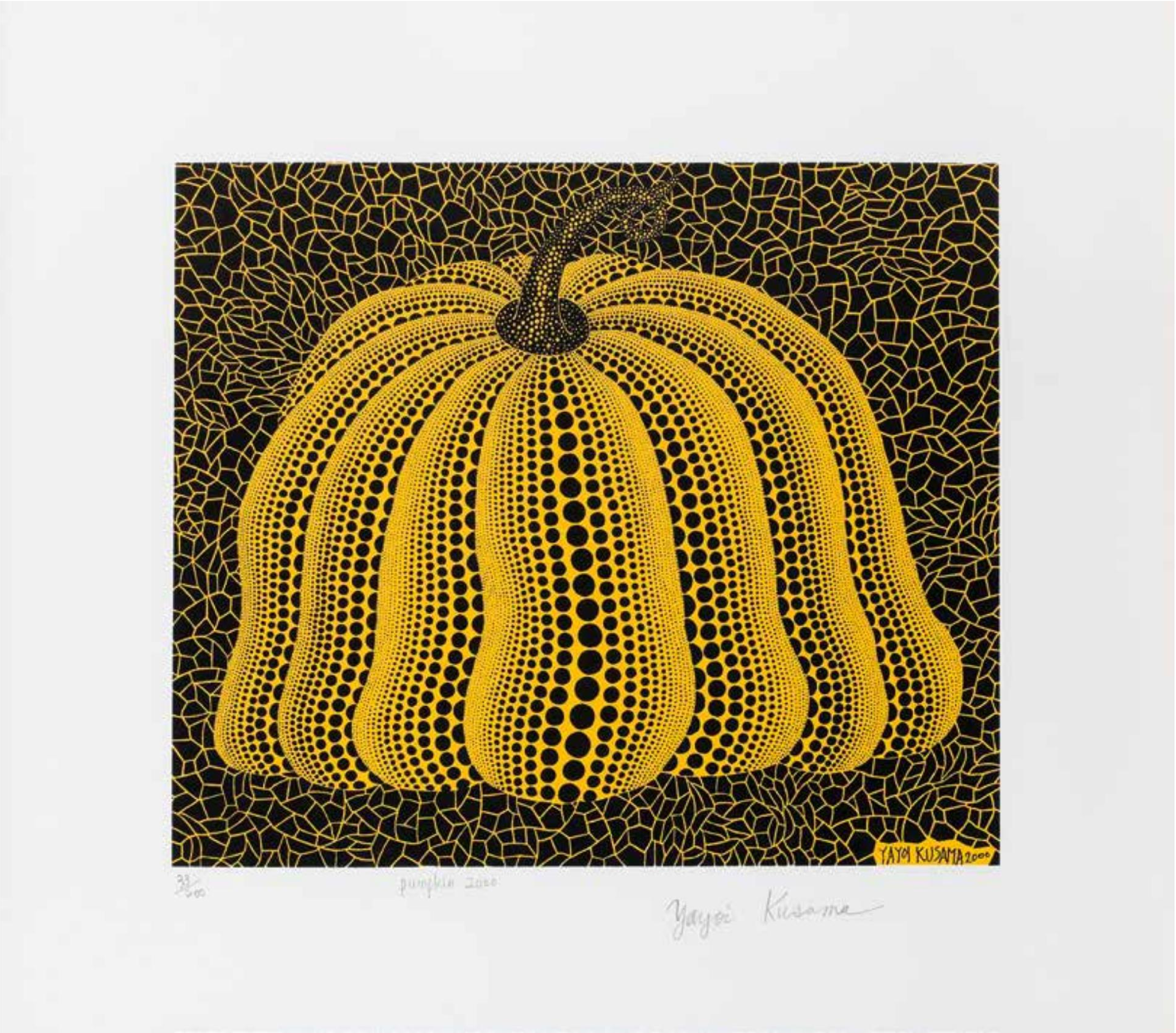
Hip bop
Corneille's *L'Orchestre de Jazz Be Bop* set a new world auction record of DKK4,356,000 at the CoBrA sale at Bruun Rasmussen, Copenhagen in December.



His habitat
The sale of Sir Terence Conran's Contents of Barton Court in December made three times its estimate and was 100 per cent sold.



World record
Bản Nậm Nà by Vietnamese artist Nguyen Van Binh sold for HK$1,389,000 in Hong Kong in December – a new world auction record for the artist.

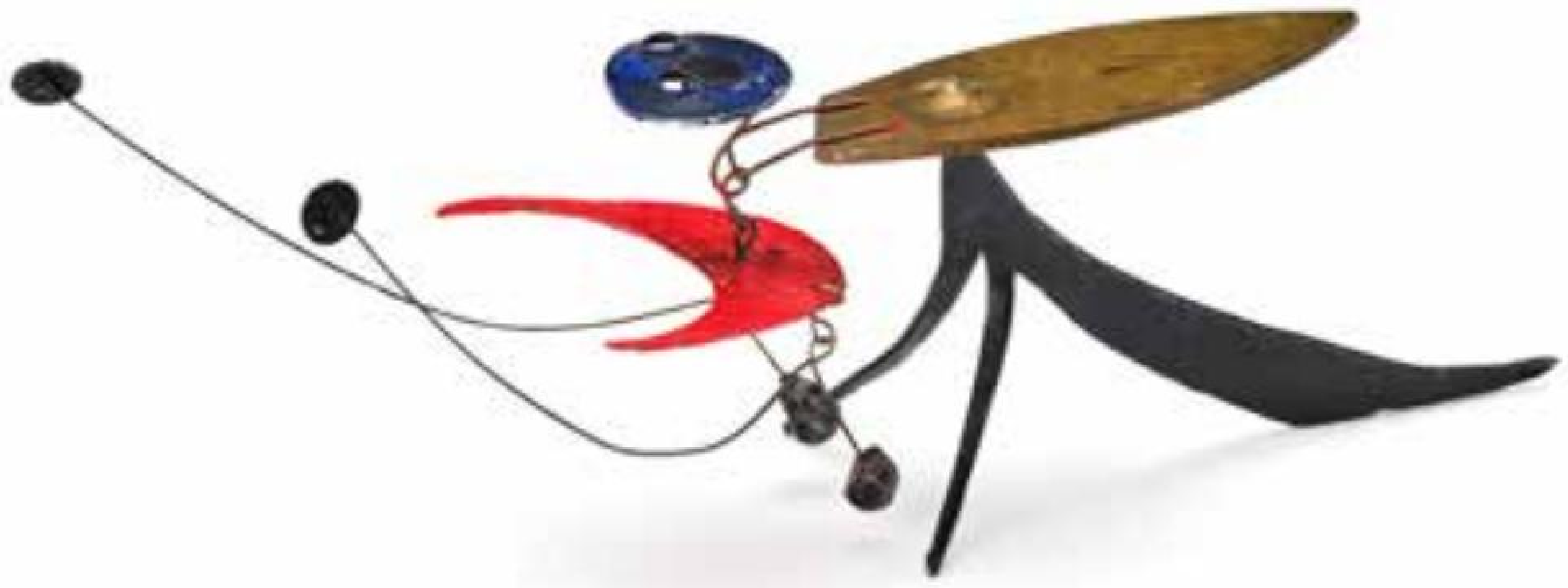

YAYOI KUSAMA 2000
33/200
pumpkin 2000
Yayoi Kusama

Hot Off the Press

London
Wednesday 19 April
2pm

Yayoi Kusama (Japanese, born 1929)
Pumpkin 2000 (Yellow)
Screenprint in colours, 2000, on wove paper, signed, titled,
dated and numbered 33/200 in pencil
Estimate: £20,000 - 30,000
($25,000 - 35,000)

Enquiries: Carolin von Massenbach
+44 (0) 20 7393 3941
carolin.vonmassenbach@bonhams.com



Digital first

Lucinda Bredin talks to Louise Arén, CEO of Bukowskis, about respecting traditions while pursuing game-changing innovations

Above
Alexander Calder, *Untitled*, which achieved SEK8,500,000 at Bukowskis

Right
Louise Arén, CEO of Bukowskis, part of the Bonhams network

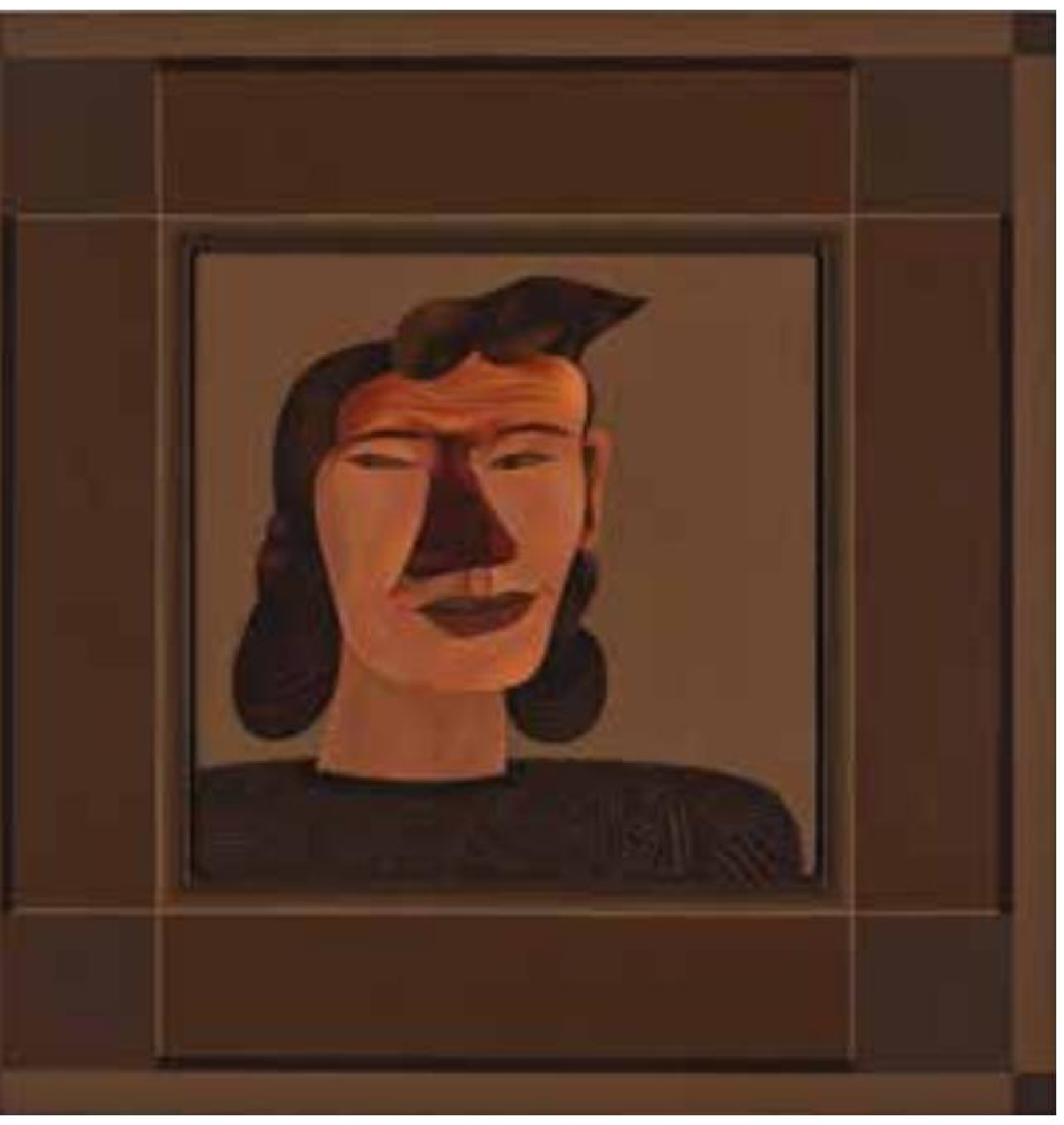
The first sight after walking through the heavy wooden door is a gallery filled with outcrops of sculpture. This is an exhibition at Bukowskis, specially curated to coincide with Stockholm Design Week, but the boundary between the artwork and the plinth seems to have dissolved. Instead of being merely a vehicle for display, the pedestals have taken on different shapes – a column of melting steel, a series of platforms, a starburst… it serves to highlight an undervalued element, elevating it to centre stage.

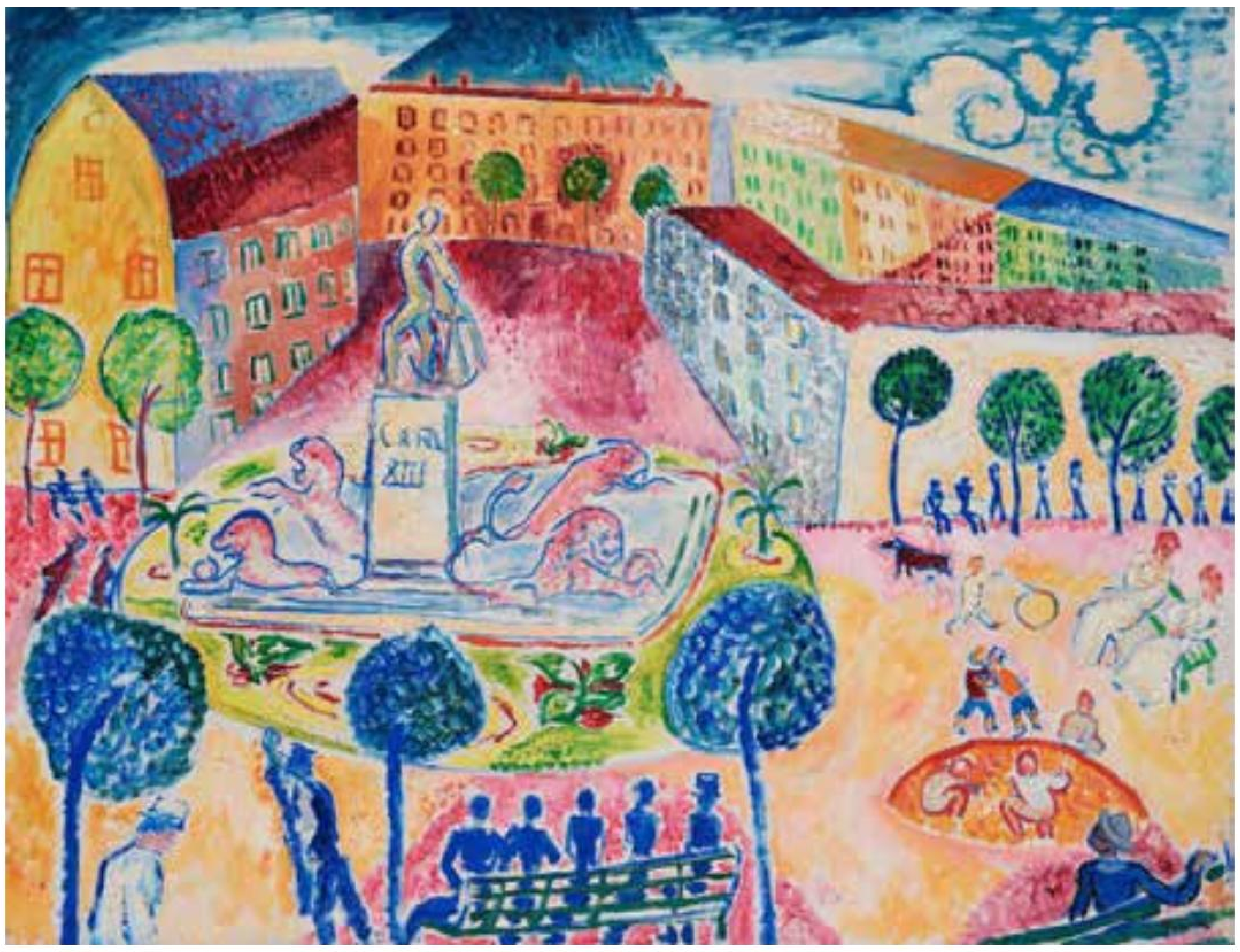
To take an idea and turn it on its head is at the core of Bukowskis. The auction house, which was acquired by Bonhams in January 2022, is the most renowned in Sweden. Its headquarters, a magnificent and sedate white stucco building, overlooks Berzelii Park by the edge of the harbour in the centre of the capital. It is, geographically and spiritually, at the heart of establishment Sweden. And yet it continually reinvents itself to reveal a surprising and innovative side.

Louise Arén, the CEO of Bukowskis, is sitting at a long mid-century elm table in an elegant room with teal-coloured walls. It turns out to be the staff kitchen. Louise has led Bukowskis since 2016 and she is rightly proud of the balance that has been struck between the heritage and the digital power of the brand. As she says, "It's a company that offers an extraordinary sense of Swedish history, as well as the most cutting-edge contemporary art and design. It is this that attracts both new and old clients."

I ask Louise if anything has changed since the acquisition of Bukowskis? She smiles: "An exciting journey has just begun. It is extraordinary to think that, now we are part of an international network, we have more salerooms and specialists than any other auction house in the world. And we can see how advantageous this is for clients. We can't take this local business much further without an international partner. We need to reach out to a global audience. In my view, in a few years' time, the regional auction industry won't have as many players – you need to have an international player by your side to give you increased skills, reach, experience, ambition. Likewise, we can export our talents, because, in terms of digital development, Bukowskis is at the forefront."

The auction house was founded in 1870 by an exiled Polish nobleman, Henryk Bukowski, who had joined an uprising against the occupying Russians. He washed up in Sweden – rough weather forced the ship he was on to dock at Helsingborg, which was where Bukowski disembarked. Within a few years, Bukowski had found his niche working in the Royal Library, before moving on to





Far left
Jim Nutt's painting *Tooth* achieved a world record SEK13,125,000 in 2022 at Bukowskis

Left
Isaac Grünewald, *Kungsträdgården, i solgasset* (1915) made SEK8,697,500

cataloguing the 70,000-strong collection of artefacts belonging to Christian Hammer, the court jeweller. It was to prove a perfect preparation for life running an auction house.

Bukowskis' first auction in 1873 was 923 lots from the collection of the late King Karl XV. In 1888, the house sold Franz Hals' *The Violinist,* which was given to the National Museum (where it still hangs). Other astonishing works that have come on to the block are Rodin's *Le Penseur* in the Marabou Collection Sale; Andy Warhol's *The Last Supper, 1986,* which made SEK58,250,000, the most valuable item ever sold at Bukowskis; and an exquisite cabinet by Axel Einar Hjorth that had been shown at the World's Fair in Barcelona, which achieved SEK1,150,000 in 2002. There was also the astonishing sale of film director Ingmar Bergman's possessions, which ranged from Munch's lithograph of Strindberg (both idols of Bergman) to a wastepaper basket (estimate SEK300-400, achieved SEK11,000). Recent triumphs include achieving a world record for the American artist Jim Nutt, whose work *Tooth* sold in the Contemporary Art and Design Sale. Coming up in March is an exceptional collection of designer clothes and accessories that was featured in a 12-page article in *Vogue Scandinavia.*

Given its history, live auctions are clearly in the DNA of Bukowskis. How did Louise present the shift to digital to her clients? "It's true that some of them expressed concern. Are you going to put everything online? Are you going to take away our catalogues? Are you going to stop live auctions? So I realised we have to explain to our clients what digital means. So I told them that we would facilitate browsing for lots, placing bids and paying – all online. When we started to talk in that manner, people got excited. I am proud of that. We understand what the younger audience wants – and what the traditional clients want as well."

Born in Linköping, a university city 250km from Stockholm, Louise was the person who led what she calls "the challenge to transform a 150-year-old auction house into a digital, modern and data-driven business". She didn't come from an auction background, but spent her early 20s in television production – "a really good learning platform" – before moving into marketing and digital management positions of international companies: for example, spending six years developing and implementing the digital strategy for Absolut Vodka. She worked on the ground-breaking development of X-series, too, part of a project with the telecom operator 3. "That was really exciting," said Louise. "The result was that everything we once did on our computers or watched on TV was enabled for our mobiles. It was life-changing for everyone."

What was the first thing she implemented at Bukowskis? "I brought in one strategy and one vision, and I was very firm about where we were going, and how to run a commercially driven business. The board said: 'We trust you – here are the keys.' It was the best opportunity one could have. I have to say, the management team was key to implementing the strategy and it was embraced by all our staff. We have different personalities and skill sets, but we all walk in the same direction."

I tell Louise how beautiful Bukowskis' saleroom looks – design is clearly at the forefront of the brand. "We modernised the premises, we arrange collaborations with upcoming brands, invite emerging designers, and curate design auctions to attract younger audiences to get rid of the barrier between them and coming into Bukowskis. We opened our arms to allow more people in and it has really worked. We are a superstar brand, and expectations are very high – rightly so. We turn around 70,000 lots a year, and people buying online from us are very familiar with e-commerce and the support they receive, so they expect the same from us."

What does the future hold? Louise knows the answer to this. "Our full focus is to further explore and expand our collaboration with the Bonhams network. It's absolutely key that we progress and become more internationalised to push Bukowskis forward as a brand and business. As a leading auction house, it's easy to think that we have a given place and position in the market, but it's rather the opposite these days! Our success over the years has put pressure on our competitors and we have seen considerable investment on their side during the past two years in digital capabilities, staff and premises. So, for us, it's about growing together with the Bonhams network and becoming part of the international arena, so that we can maintain our leading position locally. We will continue to be in the forefront digitally and accommodate our clients to offer the best experience possible – in all aspects of the business."

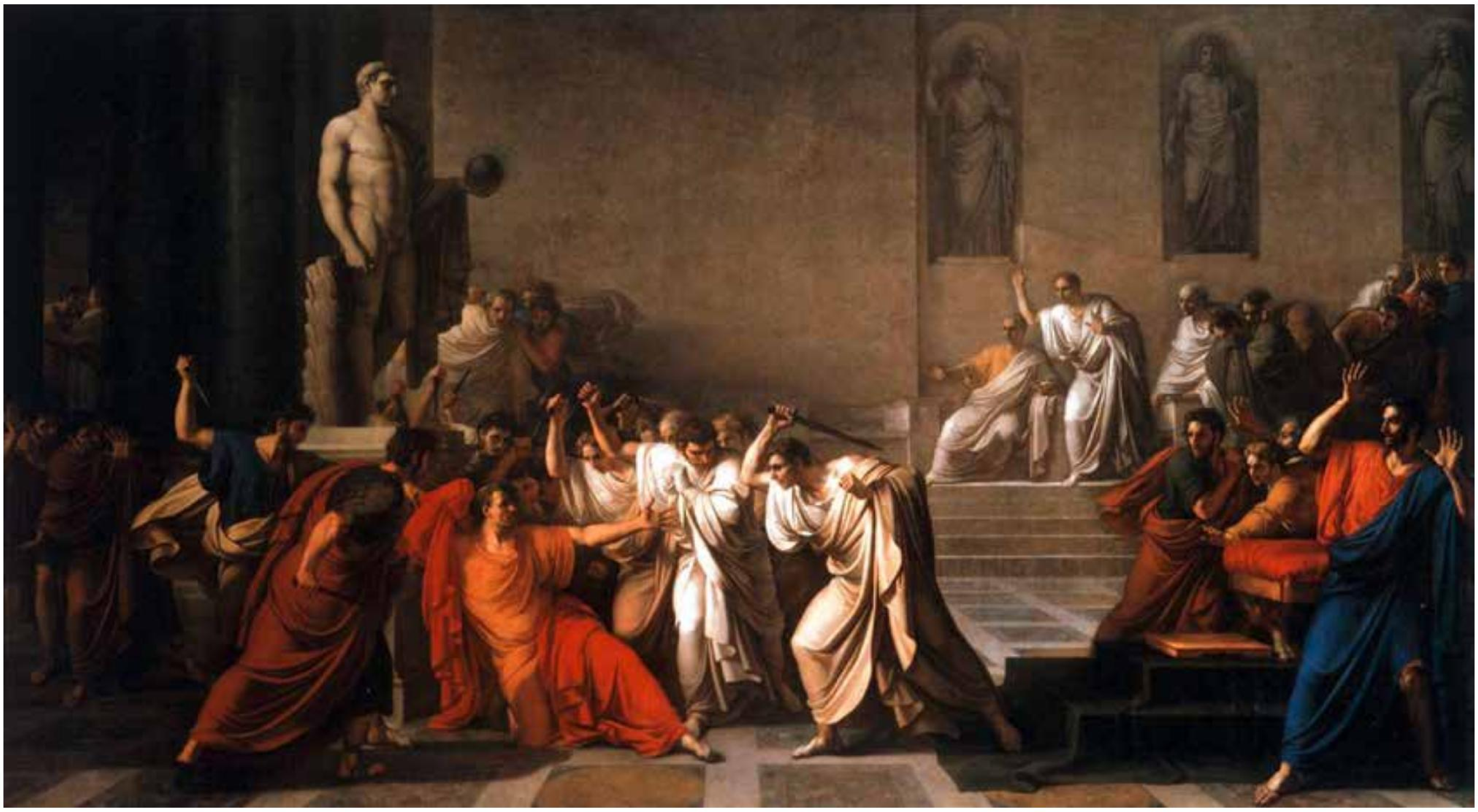
Lucinda Bredin is Editor of Bonhams Magazine.

Prints & Multiples

New York
Tuesday 9 May
1pm

Andy Warhol (1928-1987)
Marilyn Monroe (Marilyn), (detail), 1967
Screenprint in colors on wove paper
signed in pencil, dated and stamp-numbered 123/250
91.4 x 91.4cm (36 x 36in)
Estimate: $70,000 - 90,000
(£60,000 - 75,000)

Enquiries: Deborah Ripley
+1 212 644 9059
deborah.ripley@bonhams.com



© ALAMY

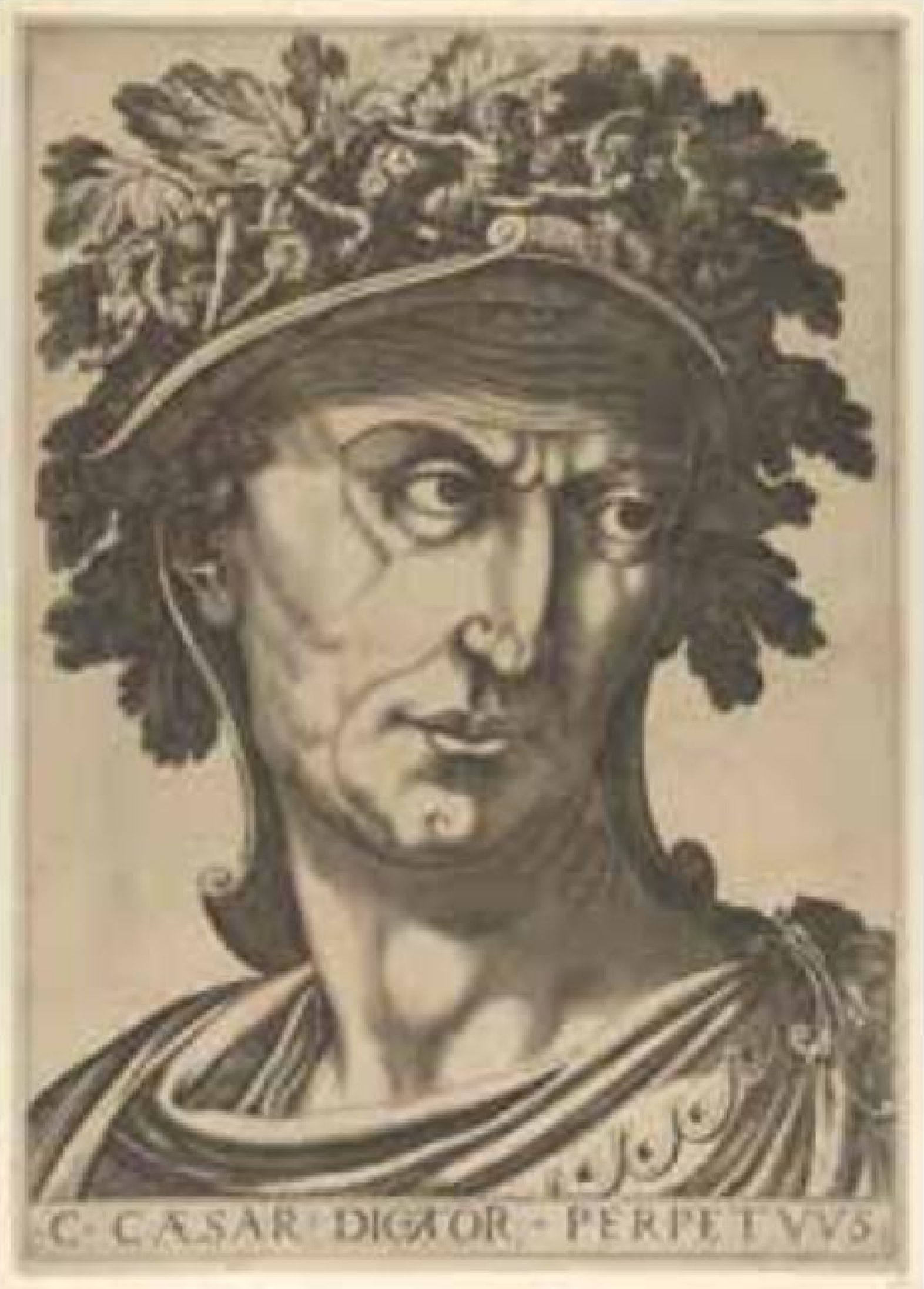
Hard currency

Ancient Rome could be a brutal place. Indeed, Caesar's assassin even advertised his crime with a celebratory coin, says ***Frank L. Holt***

Think of the thousands of lofty ideals commemorated on coins of the world: Liberty! Justice! Charity! Unity! Peace! Equality! Murder? This last might seem out of place to us, but not to the ancient Romans. Their money celebrated a long list of public virtues from *aequitas* ('fairness') to *virtus* ('courage'), but with a killer coin among them that shamelessly praised the merits of political assassination. Imagine a coin issued by John Wilkes Booth with the pistol that he fired at President Lincoln's head depicted on one side. Yet, in 42 BC, Marcus Junius Brutus did indeed commission a special *denarius* – one of which is offered by Bruun Rasmussen in an online sale on 15 March – to memorialise his role in the murder of Julius Caesar. To understand why, we must use that coin to get inside the mind of an assassin.

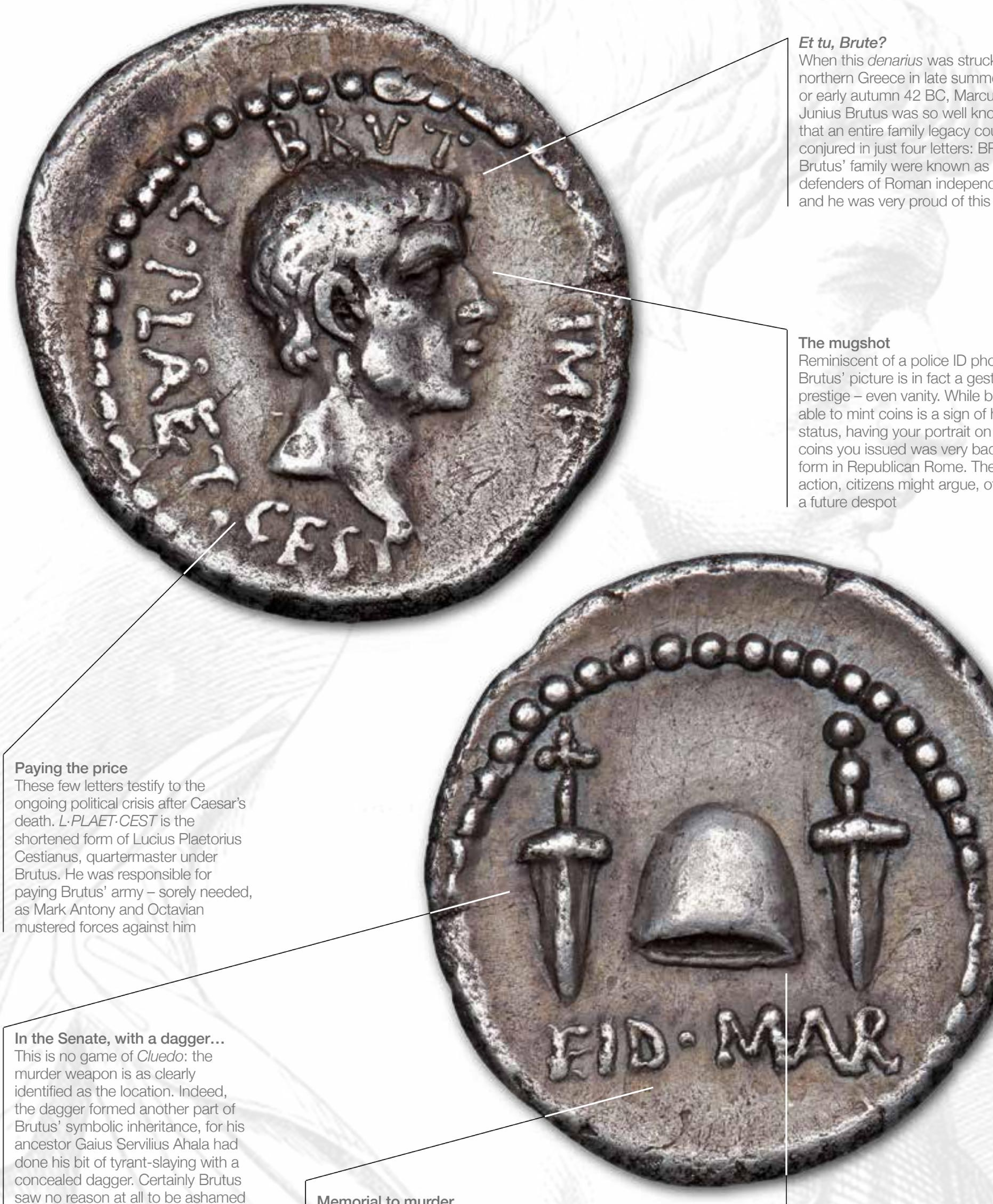
Skilfully compressed on the two sides of a small silver coin, we find the murderer's full confession – bearing his name, 'mugshot', means, motive, and even the date of his victim's death. On the obverse of this coin, the killer announces himself quite boldly. He is so well known that his name has been abbreviated simply as 'BRVT' for Brutus. He proudly hails from two of Rome's most patriotic families, with ancestral heroes in both his father's and mother's lineage. Lest anyone overlook that legacy, Brutus made a habit of celebrating it on coins. First, as a minor magistrate in about 54 BC, he issued state currency honouring the virtues of *libertas* ('liberty') and its greatest champion, his ancestor Lucius Junius Brutus. This man was famous for ridding the Romans of a tyrannical king named Tarquin the Arrogant back in 509 BC. That liberation had allowed a grateful population to found their new Republic. The original Brutus was forthright and courageous in his defence of freedom, but he was neither well-educated nor refined, as his name attests: *brutus* refers to

> "Imagine a coin issued by John Wilkes Booth depicting the pistol he fired at President Lincoln"



Top
Vincenzo Camuccini (1771-1844)
The Death of Julius Caesar, *c.*1804-1805

Above
Gaius Julius Caesar (100-44 BC), dictator of Rome from 49 BC



Et tu, Brute?
When this *denarius* was struck in northern Greece in late summer or early autumn 42 BC, Marcus Junius Brutus was so well known that an entire family legacy could be conjured in just four letters: BRVT. Brutus' family were known as noble defenders of Roman independence, and he was very proud of this legacy

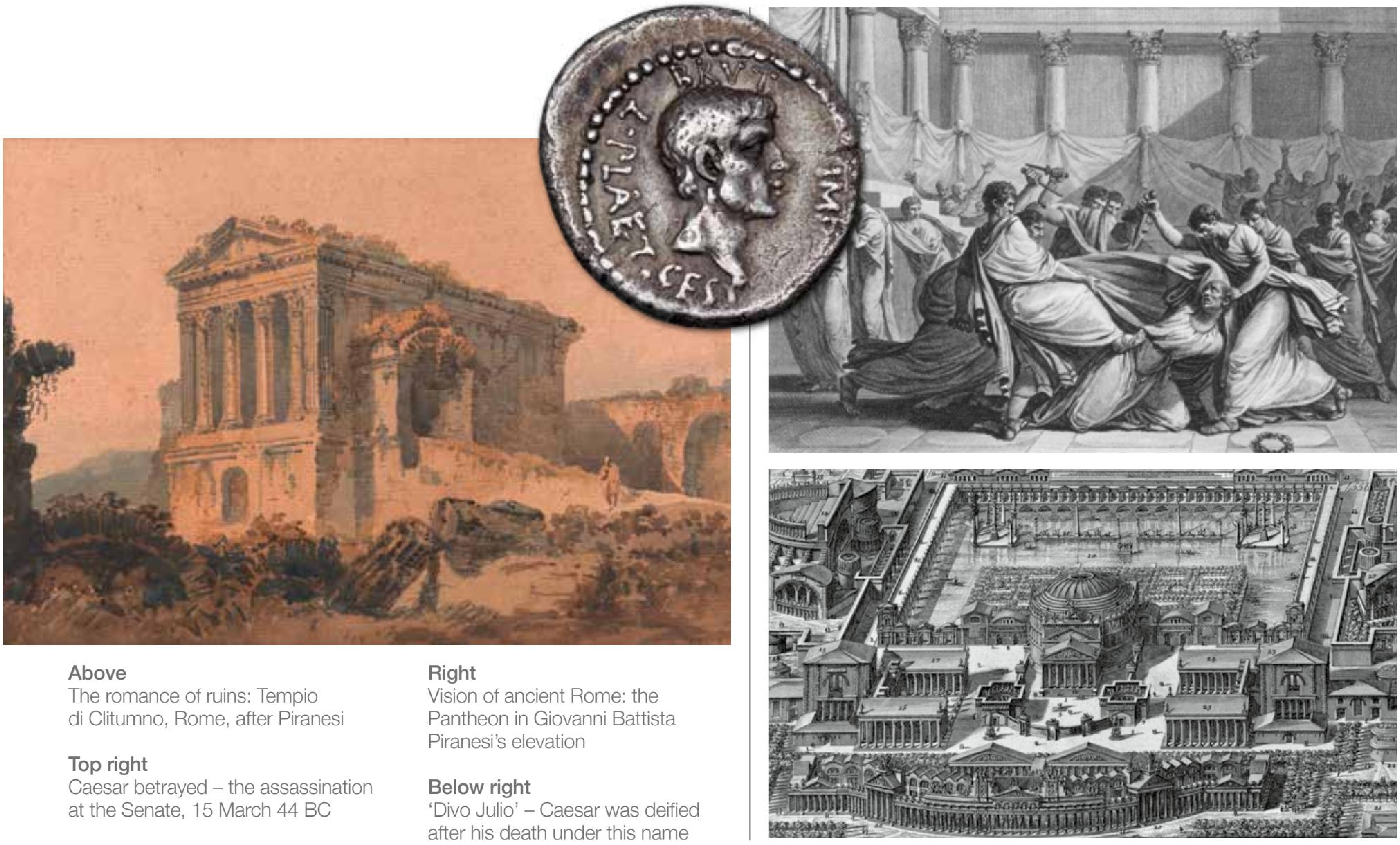
The mugshot
Reminiscent of a police ID photo, Brutus' picture is in fact a gesture of prestige – even vanity. While being able to mint coins is a sign of high status, having your portrait on the coins you issued was very bad form in Republican Rome. The action, citizens might argue, of a future despot

Paying the price
These few letters testify to the ongoing political crisis after Caesar's death. *L·PLAET·CEST* is the shortened form of Lucius Plaetorius Cestianus, quartermaster under Brutus. He was responsible for paying Brutus' army – sorely needed, as Mark Antony and Octavian mustered forces against him

In the Senate, with a dagger…
This is no game of *Cluedo*: the murder weapon is as clearly identified as the location. Indeed, the dagger formed another part of Brutus' symbolic inheritance, for his ancestor Gaius Servilius Ahala had done his bit of tyrant-slaying with a concealed dagger. Certainly Brutus saw no reason at all to be ashamed of his bloody deed

Memorial to murder
EID·MAR stands for *eidibus martiis*, 'the Ides of March' – a date so famous it needs no introduction. But that Brutus chose to identify the day of his victim Caesar's death, further demonstrates his overwhelming sense of the justice of his cause: 15 March should not just be known, but commemorated

To cap it all
In the centre of the coin is a *pileus*, a cap associated with former slaves. To Roman citizens who handled Brutus' coin issue, the implication would have been crystal clear: under Caesar they were slaves; his murder gave them freedom



© ALAMY

Above
The romance of ruins: Tempio di Clitumno, Rome, after Piranesi

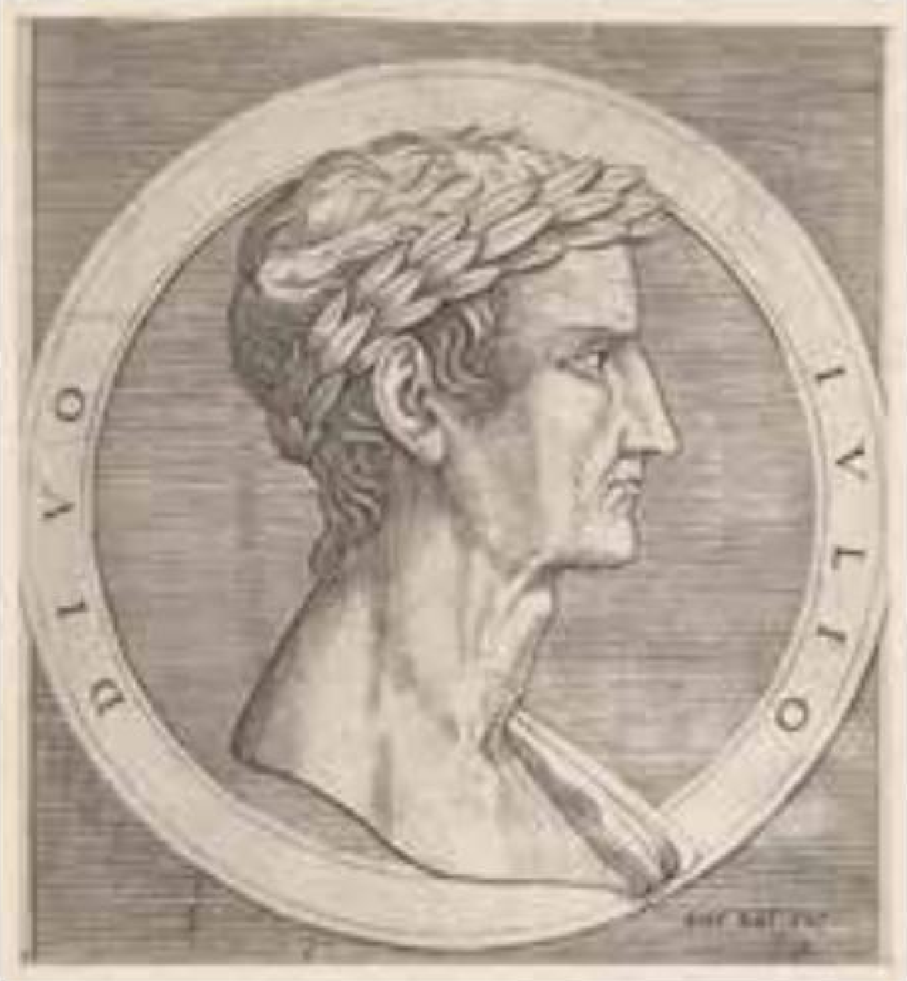
Top right
Caesar betrayed – the assassination at the Senate, 15 March 44 BC

Right
Vision of ancient Rome: the Pantheon in Giovanni Battista Piranesi's elevation

Below right
'Divo Julio' – Caesar was deified after his death under this name

someone dull and dim-witted, whence our word 'brute'. Nevertheless, the Romans erected a bronze statue showing this simple hero waving a sword in his hand. Another coin commemorated the courageous actions of Brutus' maternal forefather Gaius Servilius Ahala, who saved the young Republic in 439 BC by slaying a dangerous would-be tyrant. This noble assassin used a dagger he had concealed under his arm, hence the name his family carried down through history: *ahala* means 'armpit' in Latin. These hallowed family traditions of stopping tyrants in their tracks were never far from the mind or the money of Brutus. He very deliberately followed in the footsteps of his famous forebears by taking the lead in Caesar's assassination – and then he minted a killer coin to prove it.

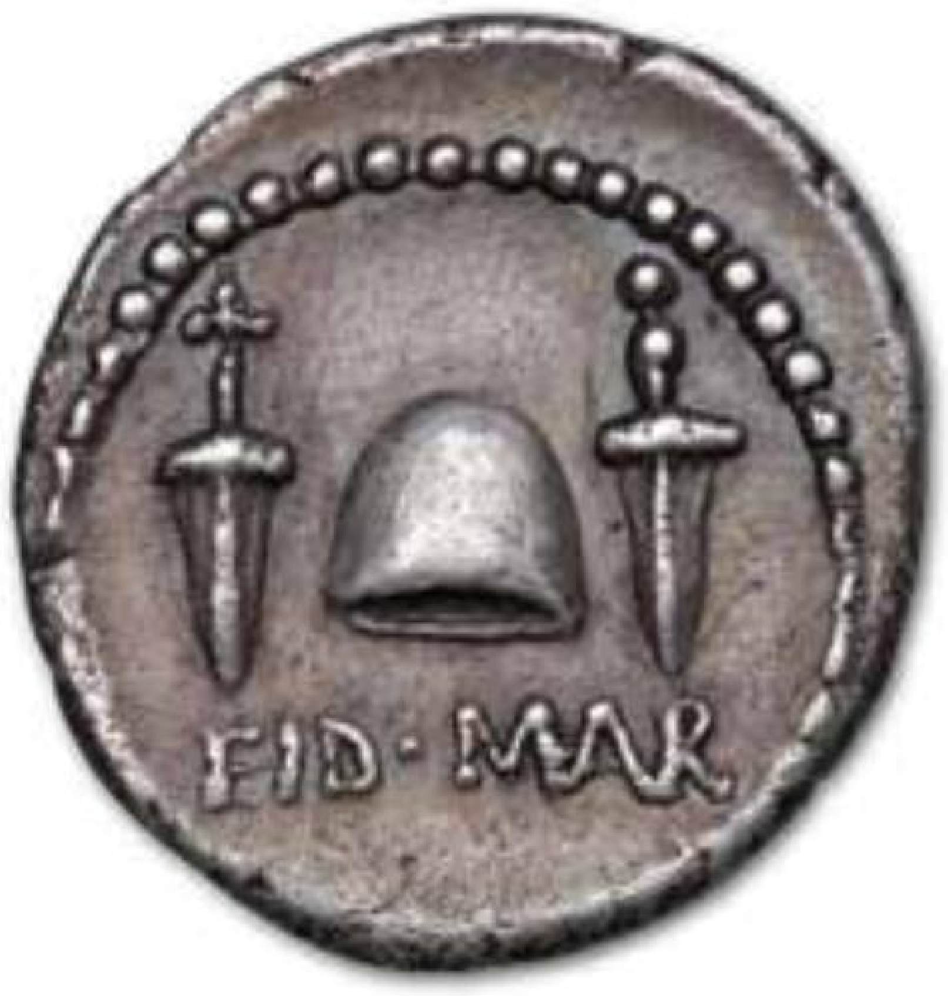
On that coin of 42 BC, Brutus celebrates himself in name, title and image. His portrait reminds us of Caesar's remark, recorded by Plutarch, that fattened, long-haired companions are far safer than the lean and hungry kind. The face on Brutus' coin does appear gaunt, with wide eyes, sunken cheeks and a frail neck. This killer was a thinker, not a mere thug. In fact, compatriots admired him as a skilled orator and philosopher. Yet, like most Roman aristocrats, he craved recognition as a man of action. To that end, his portrait looks on the stamp of his authority, the title *IMP(erator)* that signifies his success as a battlefield commander. Proud though he was of this achievement, Brutus would be pained to know that the term *imperator* would come to mean 'emperor' after the fall of the Republic he was trying to save.



That is not the only irony on this side of the coin. It was one thing to picture distant ancestors on Roman currency, as he had done earlier, but quite another to portray himself. The display of a living man's portrait on Roman money had long been anathema to Republican sentiment: it was a foreign practice that smacked of royal pomp and despotism. Caesar's self-serving image on Roman currency had been one of the loudest alarms to startle men like Brutus into opposition. Yet, just a few years later, Brutus indulges his own vanity on this *denarius*.

> "Brutus took the lead in Caesar's assassination – and then he minted a killer coin to prove it"

The other name on the obverse of this coin identifies the quartermaster (*quaestor*) assigned to accompany Brutus on military campaign: *L(ucius) PLAET(orius) CEST(ianus)*. He is a low-level official, whose imprint on the coin attests to his responsibility for the payment of Brutus' troops while on the march. Armed and ready, they have rallied to Brutus to fight those still loyal to Caesar, men such as Mark Antony and



Timeline

100 BC Birth of Julius Caesar in Rome.

60 BC Caesar joins fellow politicians Crassus and Pompey in an informal alliance known as the First Triumvirate. Their attempts to gain greater power are repeatedly blocked by the Roman Senate.

58-50 BC Caesar campaigns in the Gallic Wars. With his eventual victory, he becomes the most famous and most powerful man in the Roman Republic. Opposition from the Senate begins to waver.

51-49 BC A period of great tension. The Senate seek to recruit Pompey against Caesar; Caesar openly defies their order to relinquish his military command.

49 BC Crossing the Rubicon: Caesar brings an army across the river that demarcated the northern border of Italy and marches on Rome. Making himself dictator, he foments civil war – but also sets Rome on the path to the glories of empire.

48 BC Having pursued Pompey to Egypt, Caesar gets involved in a dispute between joint rulers Ptolemy XIII Theos Philopator and Cleopatra. Taking the Egyptian queen's side, Caesar and Cleopatra have an ill-advised affair.

44 BC Caesar is betrayed and assassinated on 15 March by his close friend Brutus and a conspiracy of Senators disillusioned by his dictatorship. According to tradition, he is stabbed 23 times.

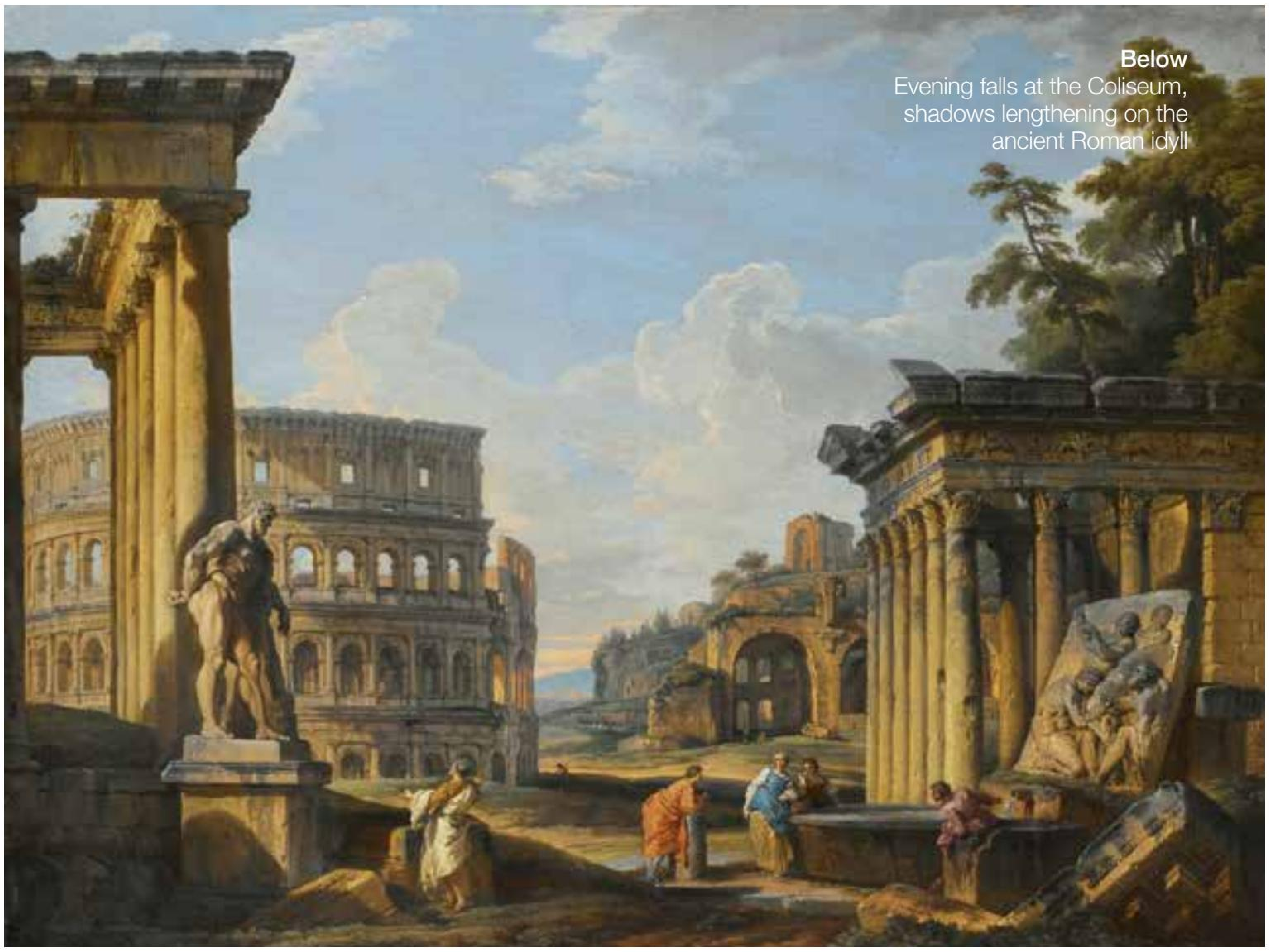
After the assassination, Brutus declares to the people of Rome that they are now free – but Mark Antony and Octavian, Caesar's great-nephew and nominated heir, begin gathering opposition.

43 BC Second Triumvirate formed by Antony, Octavian and Lepidus, deifying the dead Casar as Divus Julius. Civil war breaks out again.

42 BC Brutus and Cassius defeated by Mark Antony and Octavian at the Battle of Philippi, ending the civil war.

27 BC After years of conflict with Antony and Lepidus, Octavian becomes sole ruler in Rome – he is declared Caesar Augustus.

AD 14 Death of Augustus. His reign saw the rapid expansion of the Roman Empire, the establishment of the *pax Romana* and is later seen as the apogée of Imperial Rome.



Below
Evening falls at the Coliseum, shadows lengthening on the ancient Roman idyll

Octavian, who have vowed to avenge the fallen dictator. Brutus killed for his principles, but his soldiers preferred killing for cash. To satisfy both, these coins combine good spendable silver with a message of political justice.

Today, Brutus might take to Twitter or the television to spread his news of fulfilling his familial destiny, but coinage was the only means of mass communication in the ancient world. Brutus certainly made the most of its potential on the other side of this coin.

The image of a distinctive cap called a *pileus* occupies the centre of the reverse. This simple object sends an unmistakable message. Unadorned and fashioned from cheap felt, such caps were worn by former slaves in Rome. Every soldier serving under Brutus saw its significance, for this freedman's cap symbolised the motive for Caesar's murder and justified the current civil war. Declaring himself Dictator for Life, the tyrannical Caesar had enslaved the Roman state. The two daggers illustrate the brutal but necessary means taken by Brutus and others to liberate their Republic. Below these images, Brutus has immortalised the very day of the event: *EID(ibus) MAR(tiis)*, 'the Ides of March'. All coins have a history, but not all history has a coin: 15 March 44 BC is the rare exception, thanks to this extraordinary mintage of Brutus. It commemorates a day worthy in his mind of the examples set for him by Gaius Servilius Ahala and Lucius Junius Brutus. Assassins brood about such things. Is it mere irony that the father of Lincoln's killer was named Junius Brutus Booth?

In the end, Brutus lost the war and took his own life. A new Caesar replaced the dead one and became Rome's first true emperor: Caesar Augustus. Even as new Roman coins heralded this turning point in world history, here and there, dwindling in number with each passing year, a few aging specimens still bearing Brutus' last message survived the melting pot. The Roman historian Cassius Dio saw one of them in the 3rd century AD. He described it in his *History of Rome*: "Brutus stamped upon coins his own likeness and a cap with two daggers, indicating by this design and by the inscription [*EID MAR*] the liberation of Rome." Dio's remark adds to the rarity of this mintage, for ancient sources seldom mention a particular coin as being so historic. Today, Brutus' *EID MAR* coin may be the only signed confession of a political assassin that collectors could hope to own. It is an important historical document, immortalised in metal. Little wonder that, in 2008, numismatic connoisseurs voted this the greatest of all ancient coins.

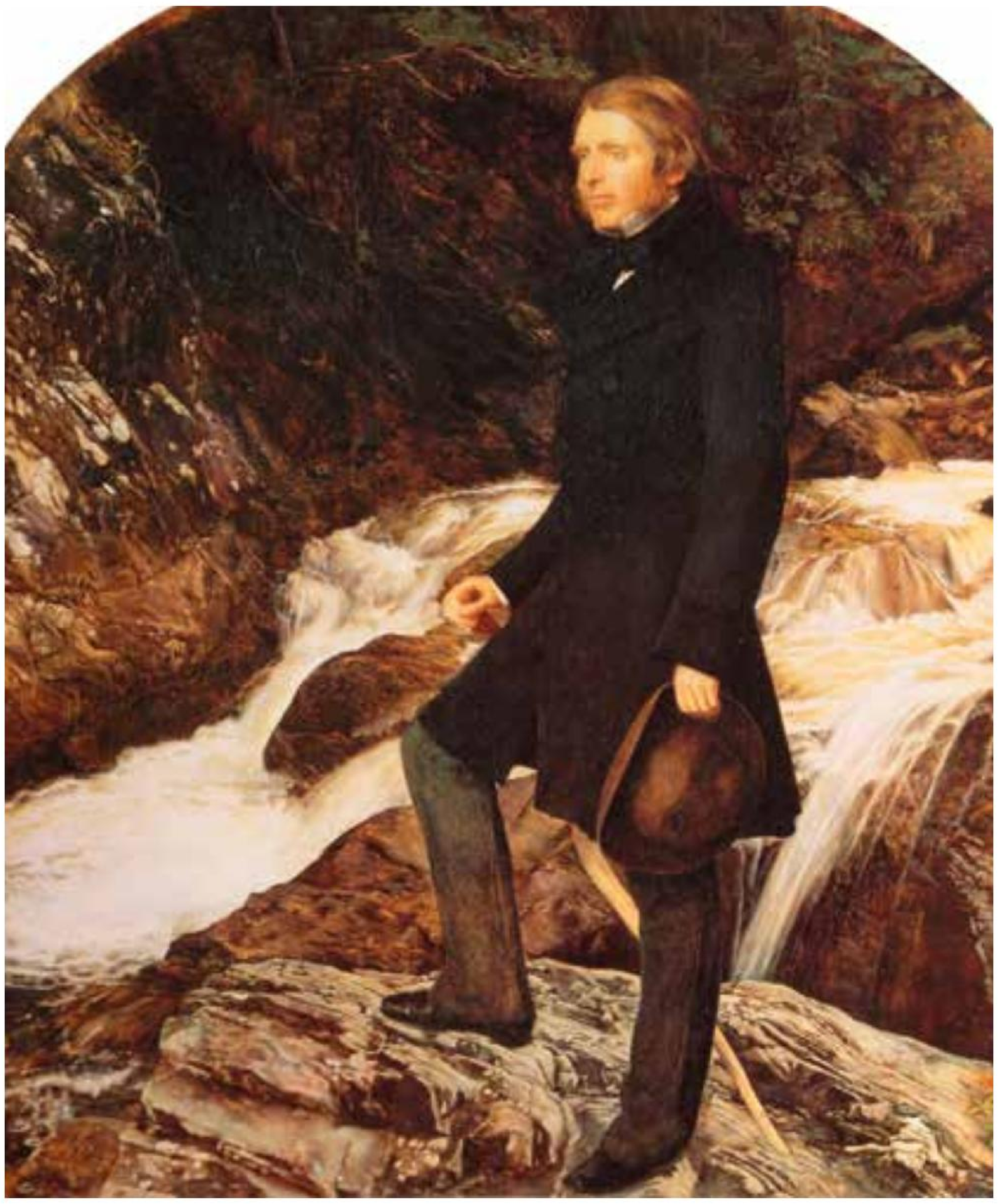
Frank L. Holt is an archaeologist and author.

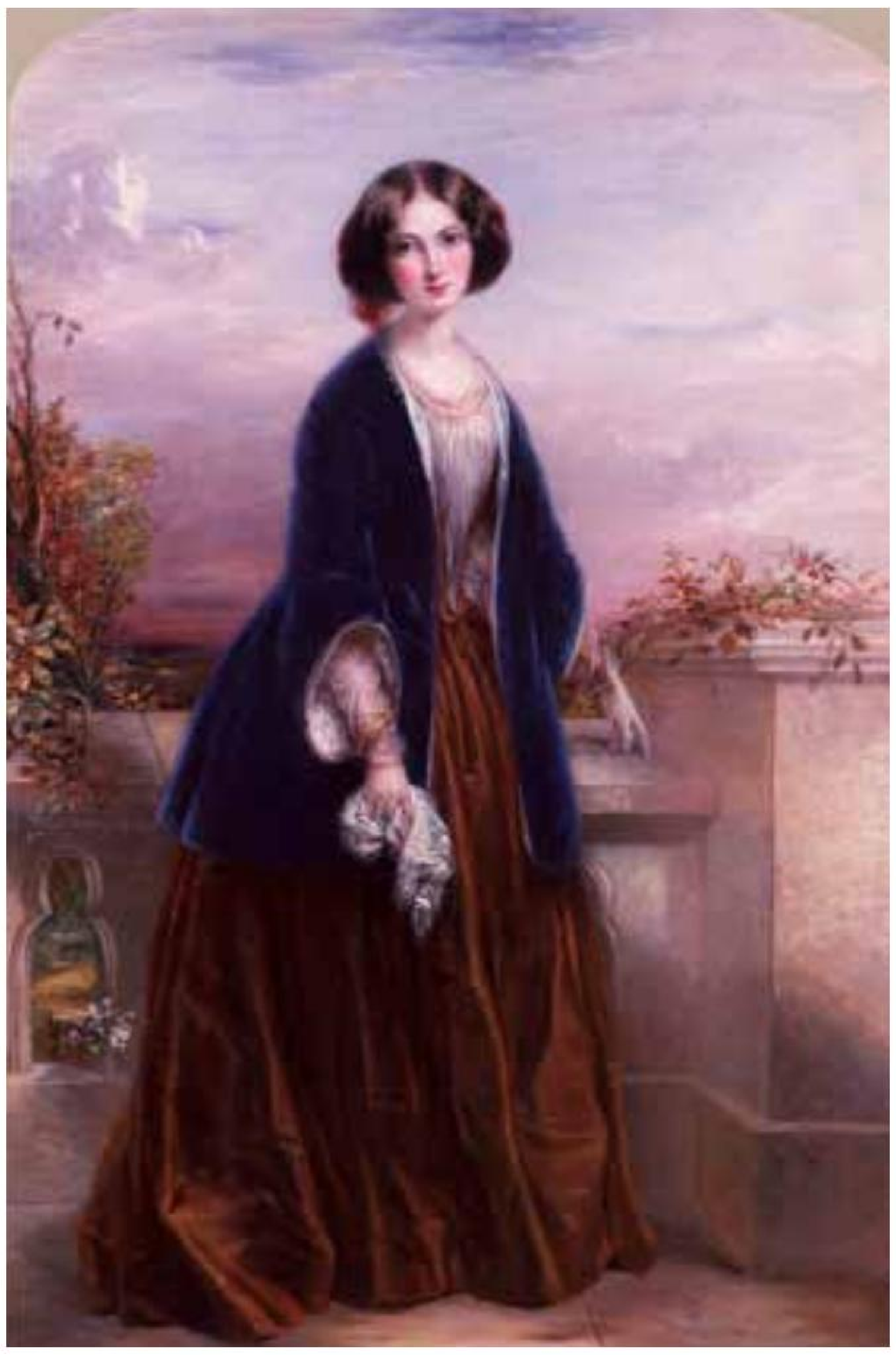
Sale: Caesar, Eid Mar denarius
Bruun Rasmussen (online sale)
Wednesday 15 March
Enquiries: Michael Fornitz +45 8818 1201
mfo@bruun-rasmussen.dk

Below
Effie Gray in 1851, when she was still married to John Ruskin

Right
Millais's portrait of Ruskin at Glenfinlas Burn, 1853-1854

Opposite
Sir John Everett Millais (1829-96)
Forget Me Not, 1883
signed with monogram and dated (lower left)
oil on canvas
84 x 63.5cm (33¹⁄₁₆ x 25in)
Estimate: £200,000 - 300,000
($250,000 - 400,000)





The art of scandal

John Ruskin, a naive old man, lost his beautiful young wife to a thrusting artistic rival – so the story went. But he was nobody's fool, says ***Christopher Newall***

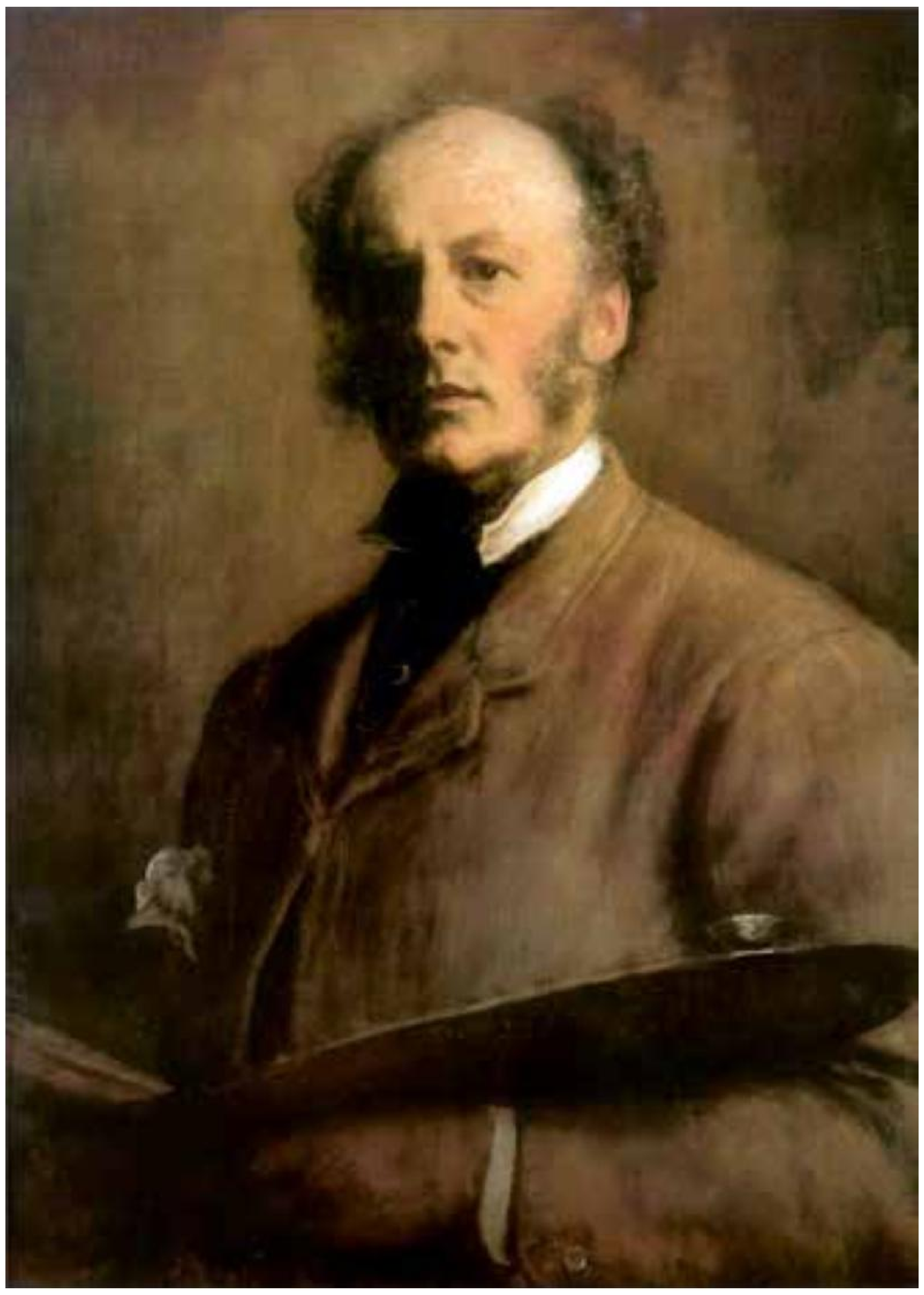
It was certainly complicated. In the middle years of the 19th century, two of the most prominent figures in Victorian art – John Ruskin, critic and campaigner for the arts, and John Everett Millais, the Pre-Raphaelite painter – found themselves in a love triangle. Ruskin had proposed marriage to Euphemia Gray, daughter of a Scottish solicitor, in October 1847. He was 28 years old at the time; she was 19. It seemed unlikely that she would accept him as a husband, but later there was a change of heart. So they were married on 10 April, with the wedding taking place at her family home, Bowerswell, in Perthshire.

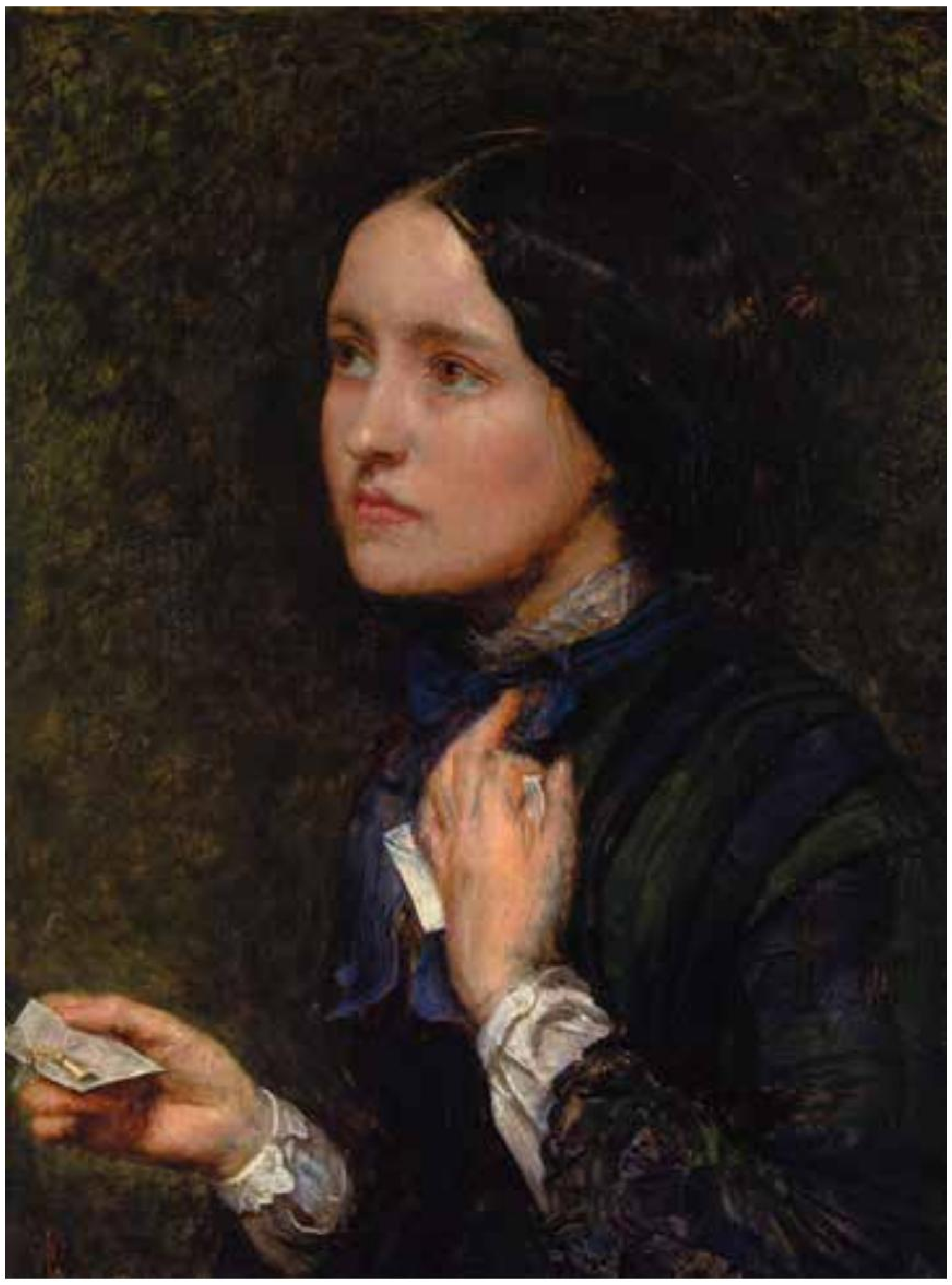
The early years of John and Effie's married life followed a conventional pattern: they had plenty of money, as John's father had a thriving business importing wine, so they lived in style in a house in Mayfair and went out in Society. Effie was admired for her beauty and her clothes and jewels (paid for from a generous 'dress allowance' provided by Ruskin senior); they travelled together, notably to Venice, where they made two long stays for the purpose of researching the three-volume *Stones of Venice*, with Effie assisting her husband with translations and the ordering of his research drawings. The couple subsequently lived in Herne Hill, close to the Ruskin family home in south-east London.

In the summer of 1853, Ruskin arranged that they should travel to the Scottish Highlands, where they and a group of friends, including the young Millais, would stay for several months at Brig O' Turk in the Trossachs. The ostensible purpose was for Millais to paint a portrait of his host as he stood beside the Glenfinlas Burn (that painting is now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). The Ruskin marriage was by this point in trouble and, as the summer went on and Effie and Millais became more open with each other, she revealed to him that, despite having been married for five years, she remained a virgin.

> "Despite Effie and Ruskin having been married for five years, she remained a virgin"

She and Millais were strongly attracted to one another. Over the time that they were in Scotland





The marriage of Ruskin (**opposite**) and Effie (**right**) was annulled, clearing the way for John Everett Millais (**above**) to marry her in 1855. Their relationship seems to have been happy – it lasted until Millais's death in 1896

together, they fell in love. In July of the following year, Ruskin and Effie's marriage was annulled, and on 3 July 1855 she and Millais were married.

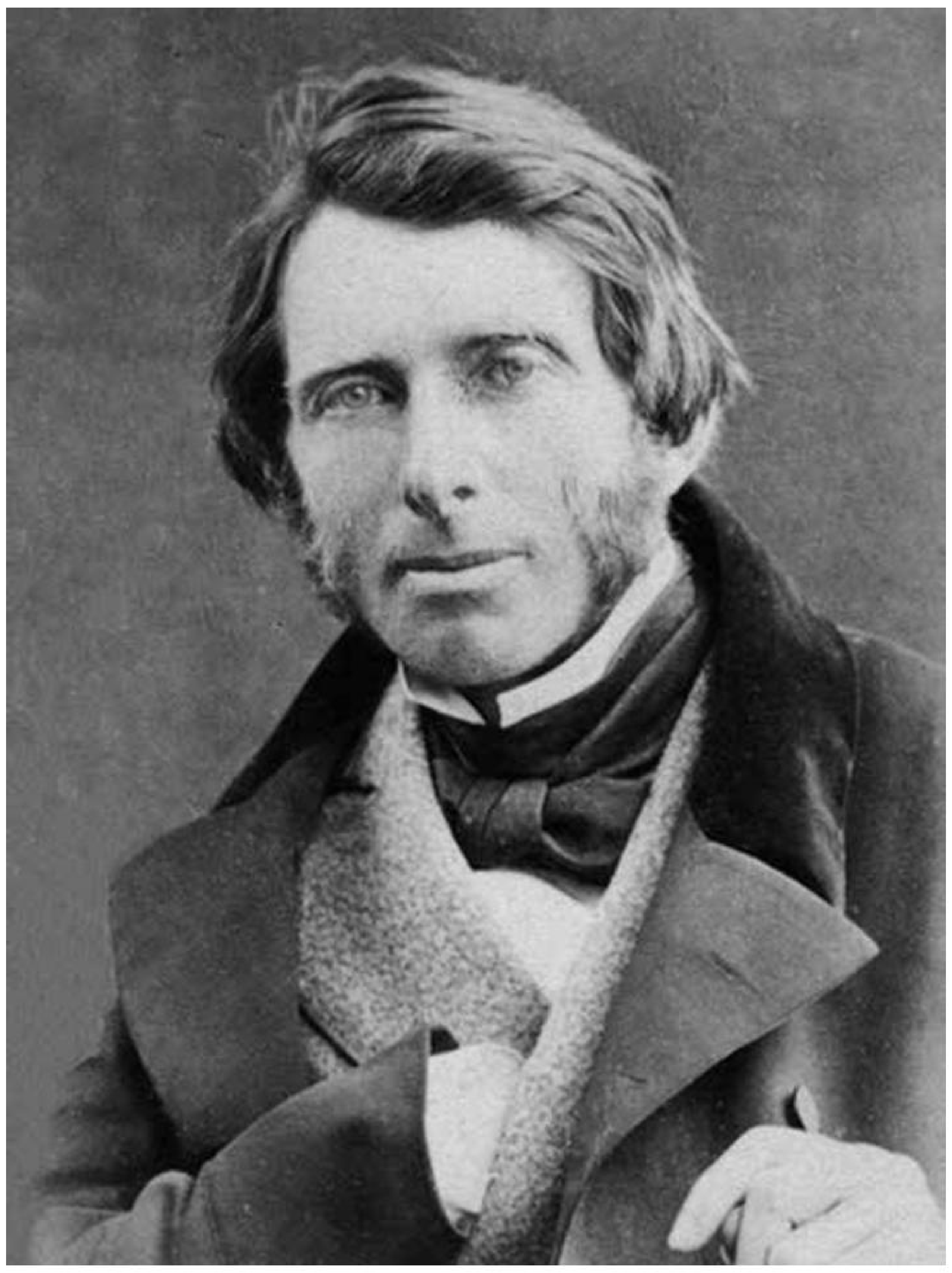
This much is uncontroversial, yet questions arise. A book by Robert Brownell, entitled *Marriage of Inconvenience*, was published in 2013 and it offers a different perspective. His explanation for Effie's volte-face regarding the proposal she received from Ruskin was, of course, money. Her father, George Gray, had made unwise investments in a number of speculative stocks, including Continental railway shares bought on an instalment scheme that, when the market turned against him, threatened professional and social disaster. Thus Effie, the Gray family's eldest daughter, was urged to accept the proposal of a suitor who was known to have a good fortune and even larger expectations.

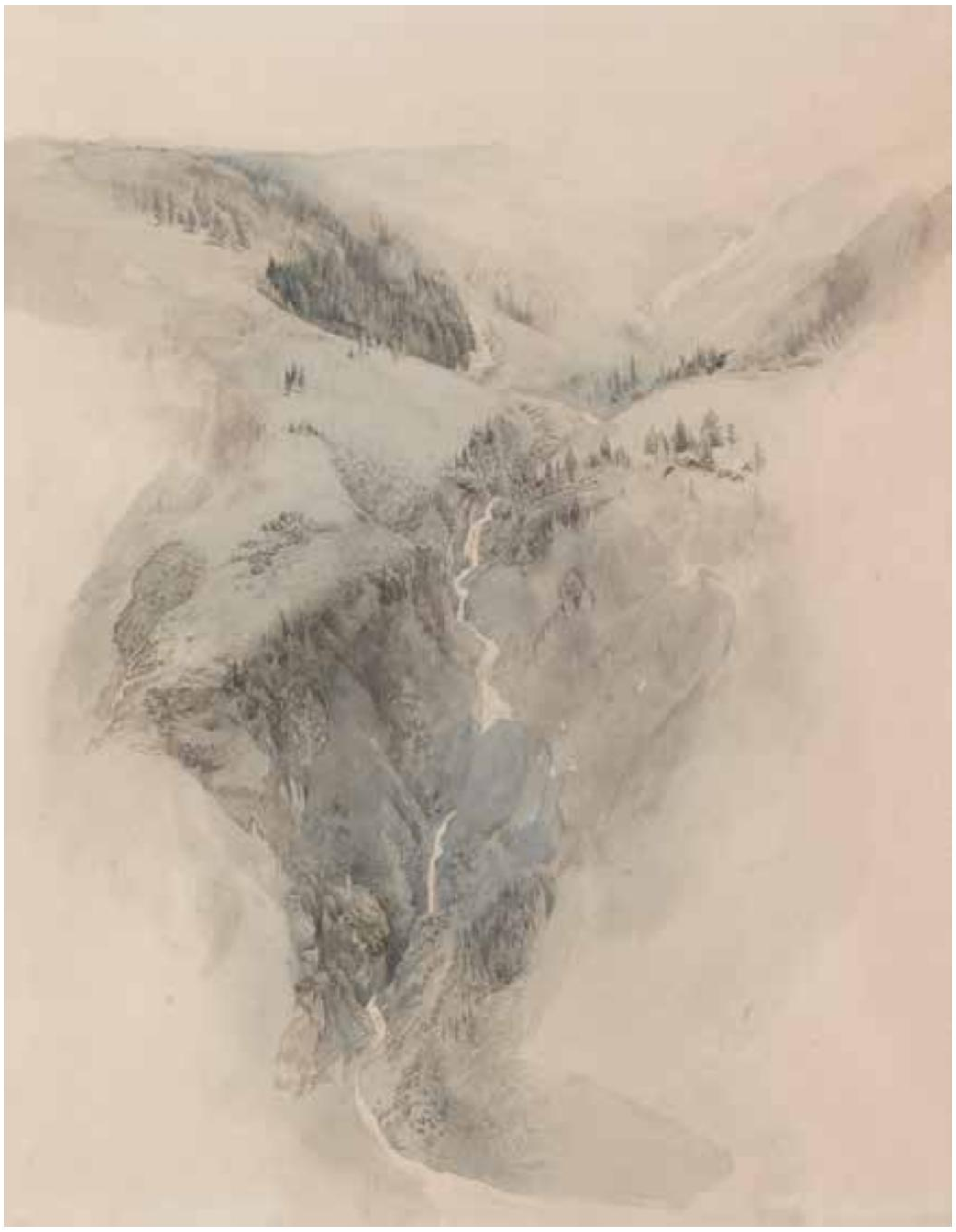
Ruskin realised that Effie had agreed to marry him at her parents' insistence even before the wedding took place. It was impossible to change course, because of the scandal that would have been unleashed had he withdrawn his offer of marriage, but he then faced a life together with Effie into which he perhaps felt he had been tricked. From the very start of their married life, he was looking for an escape. The legal system, as it operated in the mid-19th century, made divorce very difficult, but Ruskin knew an annulment of a marriage might be granted on the grounds of non-consummation – which could offer an explanation as to why there were no sexual relations between them. This is potentially a more plausible reason than his dismay at finding that his bride had pubic hair, as earlier commentators had suggested.

There was therefore an ulterior motif in Ruskin's invitation to Millais, and his commission for the young artist to paint his portrait in 1853; it was Ruskin's hope and intention that, in the seclusion of the Scottish Highlands, a friendship would come about between the two younger people (Effie, born in 1828, was by then twenty-five, while Millais was a year younger), and then perhaps something more. The arrangements at the hotel at Brig O' Turk were quite informal: Millais and Effie were allowed an unusual degree of access to one another, and especially were permitted to take long walks together. Inevitably, and as Ruskin surely intended, they confided in one another, and quite quickly fell in love.

> "He made a translation between nature... and the secrets of a woman that he might only imagine"

People who have laughed at Ruskin as a cuckold – among his contemporaries and up to the present day – have regarded the events of 1853 as proof that he had no business marrying such a sweet and innocent young Scottish lass. An alternative interpretation – explained at length by Robert Brownell – is that poor old Ruskin knew that he had been duped from the start, but in the course of the five years of his marriage to Effie conceived a strategy by which he might bring the state of affairs between them to a





Right John Ruskin (1819-1900)
La Cascade de la Folie, Chamouni
signed with initials, inscribed and dated
pencil, pen and ink and wash
40 x 31.1cm (15¾ x 12¼in)
Estimate: £40,000 - 60,000 ($50,000 - 80,000)

close, and in such a way that each of them might move on. Rather than being the absurd victim of the piece, Ruskin in fact behaved with dignity and kindness – and with great good sense. Recognising the worldly aspirations of the woman to whom he had been so unsuitably wed, he set up a situation where she might start again and share her life with someone who would love her for her charm, beauty and undoubted intelligence. Thus, Effie and Millais were happily married, had many children, and together lived in the style befitting a Royal Academician (as Millais was soon to become, and even eventually President of that institution). For both – Millais himself and Effie – their desires were fulfilled.

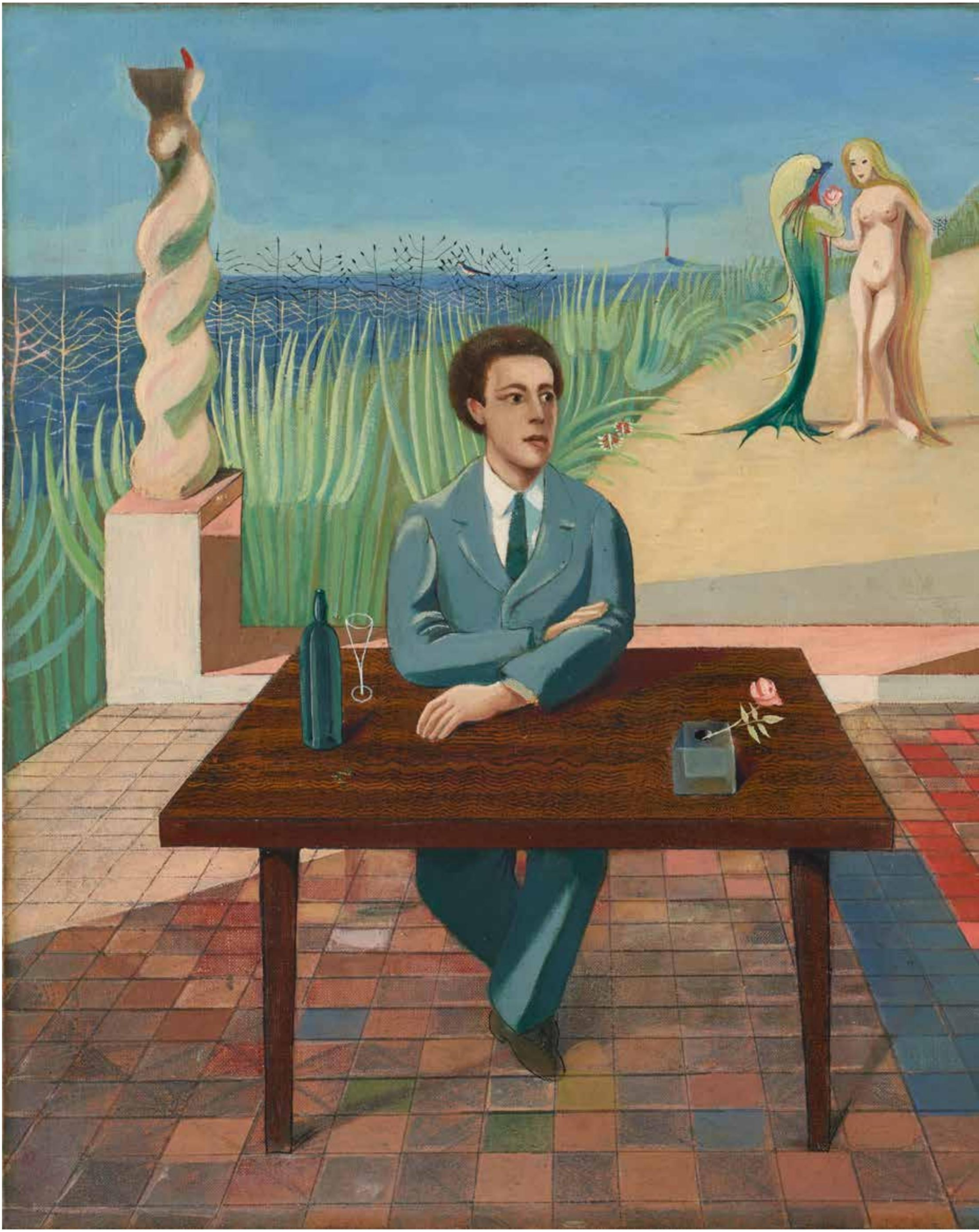
Millais was to become an admired portraitist and painter of genre subjects. His work *Forget Me Not*, a portrait of John and Effie's eldest daughter (also called Effie) from 1883, a product of the artist's maturity, demonstrates his ineffable skill and the charm he so easily instilled in his works. The model is seated and seems self-possessed, ready to meet the challenges of life head on. It offers an image of womanhood that is imbued with mixed emotions of light-hearted intimacy but also the wistfulness of separation implied by its title – the name of a familiar wildflower of the English countryside. The portrait is offered by Bonhams in London this March.

What of Ruskin? If we venture momentarily into the question of his disturbed state of mind, we may question whether the fact that he led his entire life without achieving sexual fulfilment with man or woman should be grounds for assuming that he was without sexual feeling? Letters that Ruskin wrote to Effie in 1849, when she was in Scotland and he in Savoy, are sweetly amorous. They invoke metaphors of the purity of mountain snow to describe her loveliness, but with the safeguard that when the letters were written the couple were hundreds of miles apart, and therefore such epistolary intimacy ran no risk of upsetting his determined sexual abstinence.

Ruskin was, in truth, a deeply sensuous man, but one whose means of expression lay in his speech, writing and drawing. Few better examples of the sublimation of his emotional instincts may be seen than in his drawings of natural forms and landscape, such as his beautiful study *La Cascade de la Folie, Chamouni,* drawn in 1854, the year after the crisis in his marriage to Effie. In the isolation that he must have felt, and which in the later years of his life was to become an almost unendurable torment, drawings of this kind – in which he made a translation between the forms of nature and landscape, and the secret parts of a woman's body that he might only imagine – are clues to the anguish he suffered. They are among the most personal drawings he ever made, and are works of art of sublime beauty.

Christopher Newall is an art historian, lecturer and writer.

Sale: 19th Century and British Impressionist Art
London
Wednesday 29 March at 2pm
Enquiries: Charles O'Brien +44 (0) 20 7468 8360
charles.obrien@bonhams.com



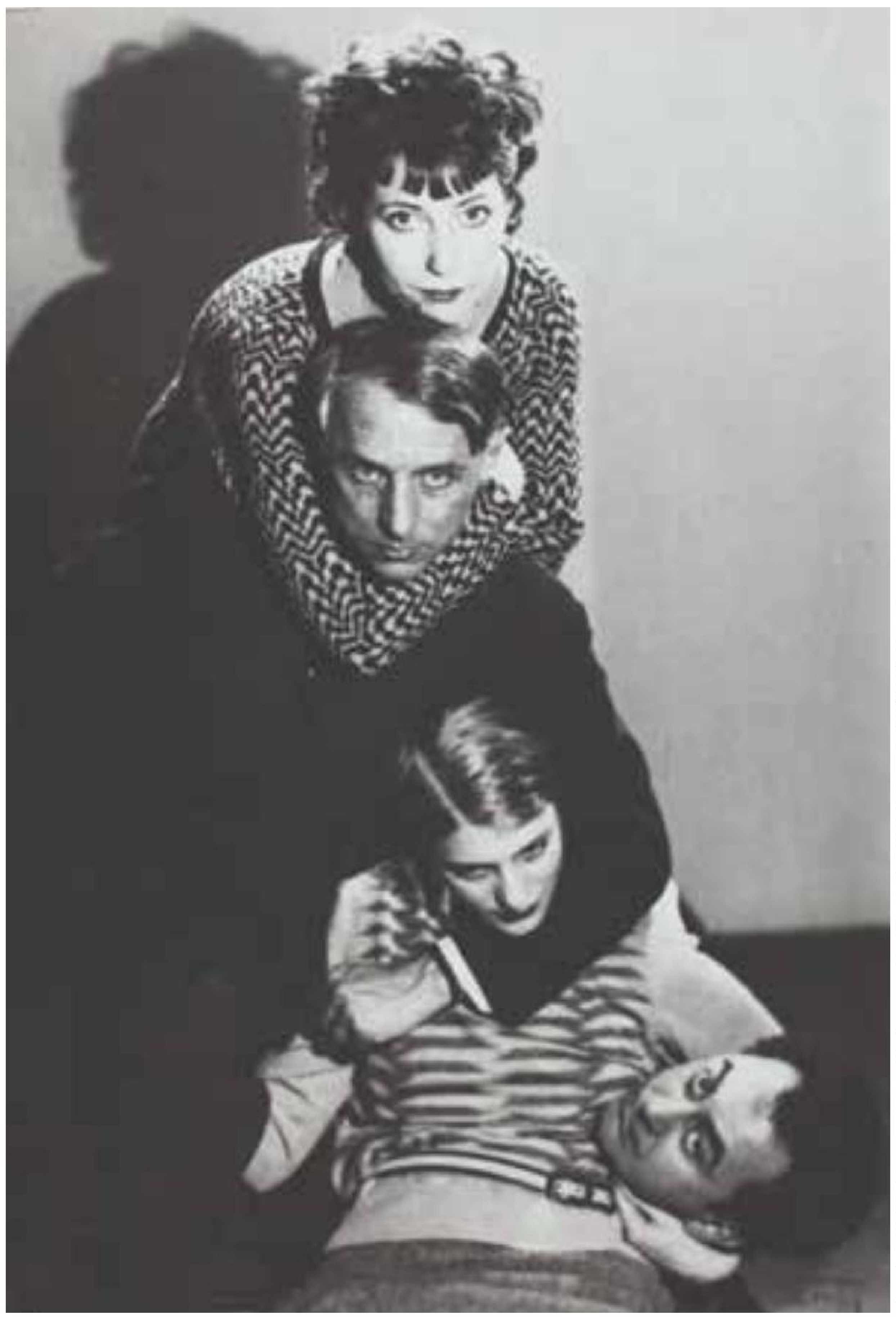


Photo: © Getty Images / Artwork: © Man Ray 2015 Trust / DACS, London

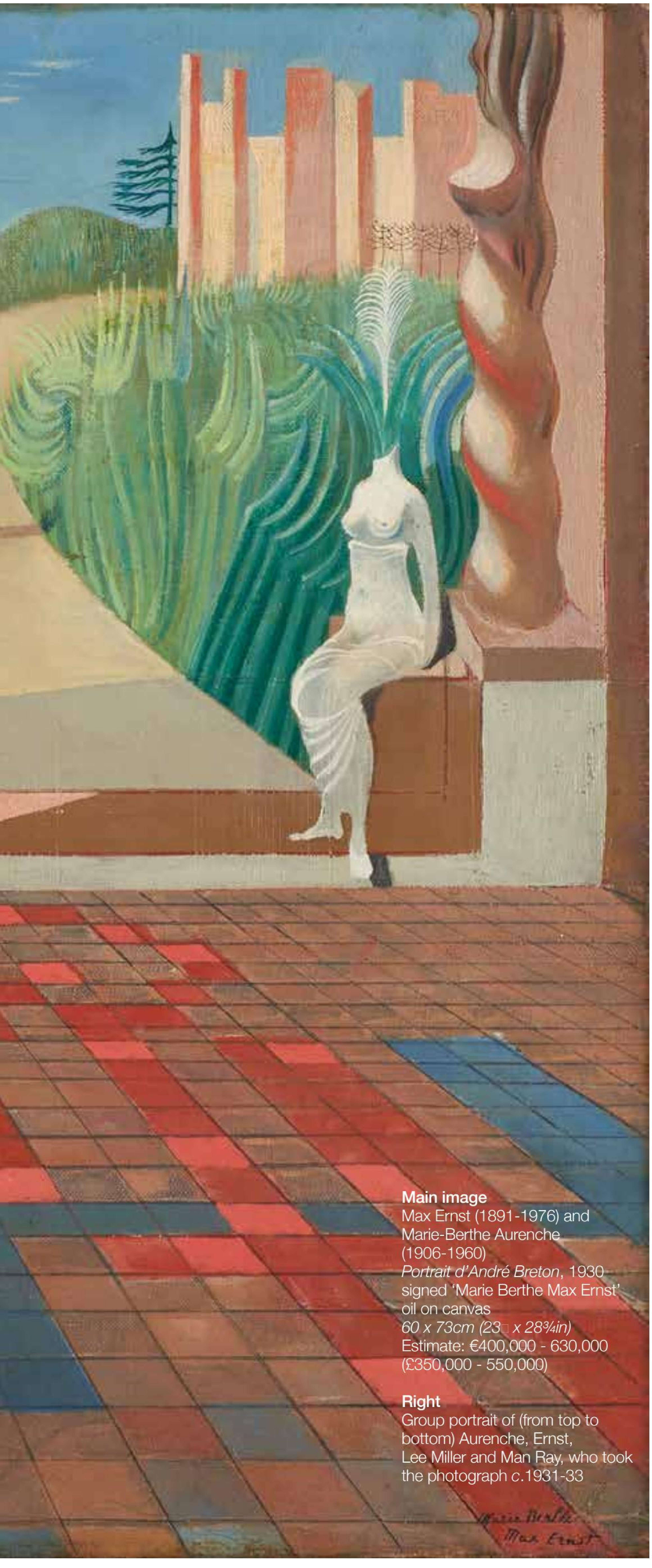
Unamused

Max Ernst was never short of a prodigiously gifted muse. But Marie-Berthe Aurenche seems particularly unworthy of neglect, writes **Mark Hudson**

A striking young woman looks back at us, wide-eyed yet quizzical, as she cradles in the crook of her arm the head of one of the most influential artists of the 20th century: Max Ernst. He, in turn, has his arm around the neck of photographer Lee Miller. She sits sprawled on top of her fellow snapper Man Ray – at that time, her lover – who took this now iconic photograph.

The latter three are, of course, all household names, pivotal figures in one of the great 20th-century art movements: Surrealism. But it's the person at the head of this self-consciously absurd human chain who commands our attention, the young woman with the big, clear eyes and bob of tousled curls. She's the one who seems to be dictating what's happening. But who is she?

Born in 1906, Marie-Berthe Aurenche was a painter and a highly visible figure on the Paris Surrealist scene in its late Twenties/early Thirties heyday, and from 1927 to 1936 she was married to Max Ernst. As Margaret Hooks observes in her fascinating study of Ernst's many amorous attachments – *Surreal Lovers: eight women integral to the life of Max Ernst* – Aurenche became for the Surrealists the embodiment of that peculiarly French concept, the "femme enfant": the child-woman, who "whether 20, 40 or 60 retains the radiant grace of childhood."



Main image
Max Ernst (1891-1976) and Marie-Berthe Aurenche (1906-1960)
Portrait d'André Breton, 1930
signed 'Marie Berthe Max Ernst'
oil on canvas
60 x 73cm (23□ x 28¾in)
Estimate: €400,000 - 630,000
(£350,000 - 550,000)

Right
Group portrait of (from top to bottom) Aurenche, Ernst, Lee Miller and Man Ray, who took the photograph *c.*1931-33

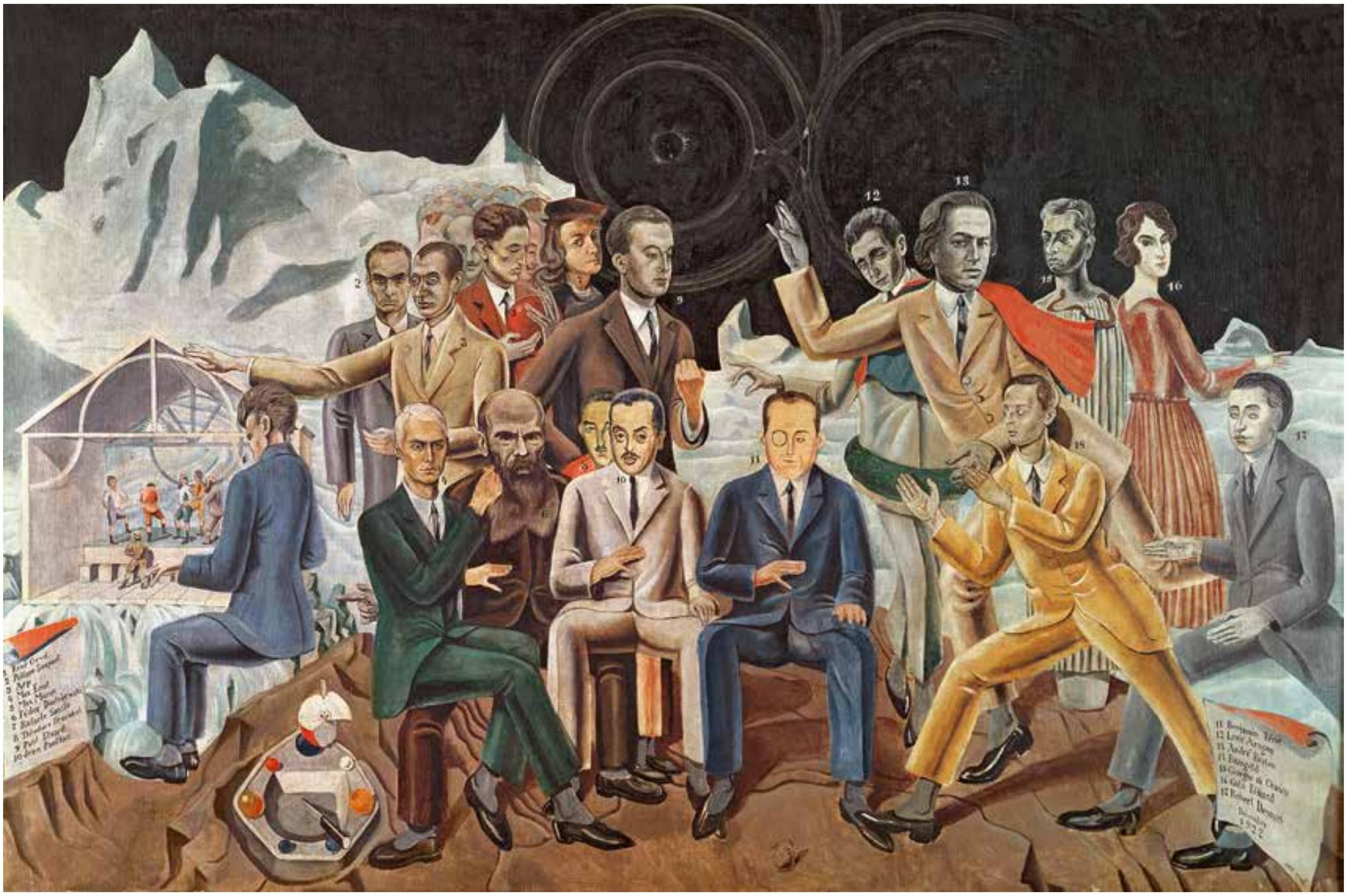


Photo: © Bridgeman Images / Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Yet in recent years, with long-neglected 20th-century women artists steadily emerging from the shadows of history to assume ever-greater prominence in our sense of that pivotal era, Aurenche has barely been mentioned. To take one notable example, *The Milk of Dreams* – the official exhibition at the 2022 Venice Biennale – took its starting point from a display of work by lesser-known women Surrealists. Its title came from a children's book by the British painter Leonora Carrington. While Carrington was long regarded as a peripheral Surrealist, notable mainly for her relationship with Max Ernst (yes, another one), her significance is now widely recognised. Aurenche, meanwhile, was nowhere to be seen.

Indeed, considering her prominence on a scene whose every event has been endlessly raked over in books and films, remarkably little information is available about Aurenche. The few paintings attributed to her, mostly impressionistic still lives, offer few clues.

Now, however, Bonhams Cornette is offering in its Paris sale *La Révolution Surréaliste* in March, an enigmatic portrait of the movement's formidable founder André Breton, a work that has changed its notional authorship four times since it was painted in 1930. It is now understood to be a collaborative work – "of mutual complementation and expression" – created on equal terms by Aurenche and Ernst. It's a painting that tells us a great deal about its creators and their tormented relationship.

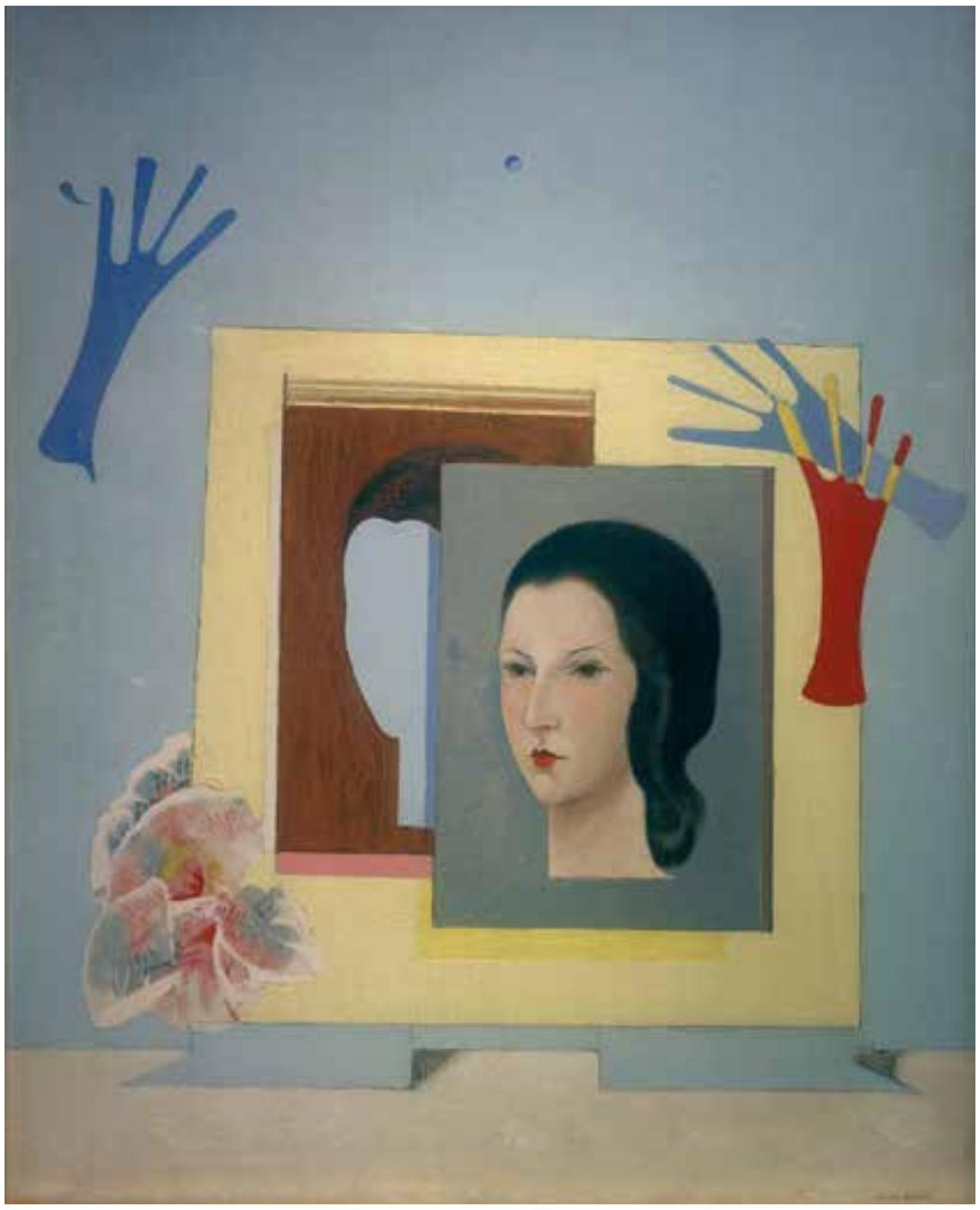
Max Ernst is the most elusive and enigmatic of the Surrealists. His aquiline features and inscrutable half-smile give little away in photographs. And where fellow luminaries such as Dalí, Magritte and Man Ray each have an instantly recognisable signature style, Ernst – the movement's great formal innovator and conceptualist – is hard to pin down, as he jumps between forms and mediums: sinister collage, frottage, grattage – laying a paint-smeared canvas over a textured object and scraping it to create interesting and unexpected surfaces – as well as painting and sculpture.

"Ernst's emotional life followed a freeform pattern of marriages and affairs"

His emotional life followed a similarly freeform pattern of marriages and affairs with some of the key women artists of the 20th century (Méret Oppenheim, Leonora Carrington, Dorothea Tanning, Leonor Fini), as well as with the most influential collector of the era (Peggy Guggenheim).

At the time of his first meeting with Aurenche in 1927, Ernst was nearing 40, divorced from his first wife, the German art historian Luise Straus, and on the rebound from a bruising ménage à trois with the poet Paul Éluard and his wife Gala – later Mrs Salvador Dalí.

Aurenche was a 19-year-old gallery assistant, a fun-loving and vivacious dropout from convent school



Private collection, Vienna.

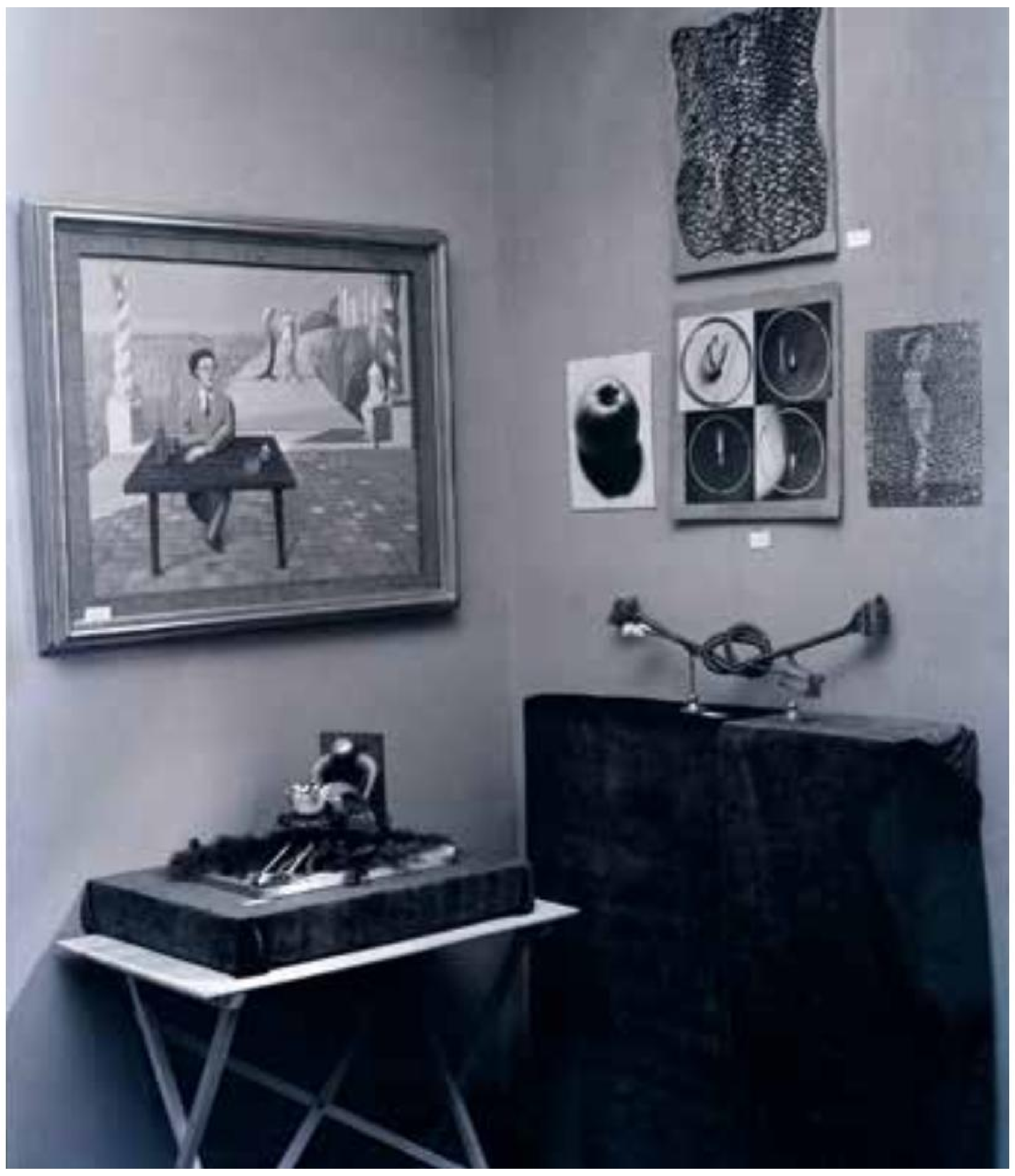


Photo: © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI
Artwork: © Man Ray 2015 Trust / DACS, London

Opposite
Max Ernst,
Au Rendez-vous des amis,
1922

Left
Max Ernst, *Portrait of Valentine*, 1932

Above
Man Ray (1890-1976),
Exposition surréaliste à la Galerie Pierre Colle, 7-18 June 1933

with a wilful streak, hanging around on the fringes of the Surrealist scene.

Ernst was immediately entranced, and the pair plunged into a passionate relationship. Aurenche's father, a conservative civil servant, horrified that his still under-age daughter had taken up with an "atheist pornographer" twice her age, called the police. Ernst and Aurenche escaped to a remote village in western Brittany, but Ernst was soon writing to the father begging for his daughter's hand in marriage. They were married in April 1927 in the fashionable church of Notre-Dame des Prés – a huge compromise on the part of the vehemently anti-clerical Ernst. His son Jimmy, then seven, observed his father's patient devotion to his new wife when the pair visited Cologne, noting in his memoirs that Aurenche reminded him of the "exotic waterbirds I had seen at the zoo, with her green eyes that were fast-moving, yet gentle."

When asked in a report on 'Surrealist Research on Sexuality' if he believed in monogamy, Ernst, the great proponent of free love and the undermining of all bourgeois norms, replied, "Yes, without any doubt."

Yet within a mere two years of their marriage, Ernst was hitting the gossip columns for "abducting" another under-age woman, Florence Pitron. While Aurenche closed the affair down as soon as she became aware of it, it marked the start of a pattern of behaviour that was to come close to destroying her.

Ernst, for all his espousal of avant-gardism in every area of life, can appear brutally indifferent to the emotional needs of others. Yet he was often generous in encouraging his partners' artistic ambitions, and frequently collaborated with them.

In their painting *Loplop Paradise,* Aurenche depicts Ernst in the role of his self-invented "shamanic guide" Loplop, Father Superior of the Birds – he was obsessed with birds. He looks far younger than his 40 years, smartly suited with enormous blue eyes. In the background, a bare-breasted young woman – looking very like Aurenche – rises out of tropical vegetation that is reminiscent of the dense forests in Ernst's paintings, but less threatening. Surreal beings – a friendly lion and a tiger with a man's head – look on. Ernst's contribution to the painting isn't easy to pick apart at this distance in history.

But the painting that comes closest to the ideal of genuine collaboration is the *Portrait of André Breton*. The formidable founder and leader of the Surrealists – who famously expelled members for the slightest infringement of the movement's tenets, however he chose to define them at any given moment – is shown seated at the seaside and in a disarmingly serene mood.

When first exhibited at the Galerie Pierre Colle in Paris in 1933, the painting was presented as Aurenche's sole work. Breton claimed it was by both artists in an essay in 1960, but later – in 1965 – attributed the picture solely to Ernst. That judgment was upheld in a 2004 exhibition in La Coruña. Now, however, the painting has been confirmed as a collaborative work by Dr Jürgen Pech, director of the Max Ernst Museum in Brühl.

Photo: © manrayphoto.com
Artwork: © Man Ray 2015 Trust / DACS, London. Image : Telimage, Paris

Above
Man Ray, *Marie-Berthe Aurenche*, 1930

Right
André Breton (1896-1966), *André Breton, an anxious friend and Max Ernst*, 1945

The Art Institute of Chicago, US. / Photo: © Bridgeman Images

While Breton criticised Ernst for allowing Aurenche to "nanny" him – doubtless for having the impertinence to object to his rampant womanising – Aurenche enjoyed a surprisingly warm relationship with this notoriously tricky character. It was certainly far more straightforward than Ernst and Breton's creatively productive, but often tetchy, involvement.

The anomalous calm of the painting's composition and atmosphere feels, then, very much Aurenche's creation. Rather than dominating the proceedings with his monstrous ego, Breton sits calmly at a table in the painting's middle ground, on a tiled terrace before a sun-drenched Mediterranean headland. Surreal beings, including a naked blonde woman and a bird-fish figure, both believed to be by Ernst, confer on a path far behind Breton, while a headless woman sits on a pediment beside one of two twisting columns. Yet these presences aren't ominous, as we'd expect in a painting entirely by Ernst: the headless figure feels more statue than cadaver. Breton – in his smart grey suit, with wine bottle and glass on the table in front of him – looks off to the right with a quizzical expression, drawn, Pech believes, from a 1927 photograph by Henri Manuel that was illustrated in Breton's 1928 novel *Nadja*, which ends with the sentence "beauty will be CONVULSIVE or will not be at all."

There's nothing remotely convulsive, however, about *Portrait of Andre Breton*. While Breton's expression – Ernst's work, Pech tells us – suggests a faint, pensive vulnerability not present in Manuel's photograph, this is a Surrealist idyll that evokes, for all its quirky touches, a sense of timeless quasi-classical harmony, rather than tormented dislocation. It's an image of the Surrealist founder painted by one of the movement's great artists in tandem with his new wife, who is directing the proceedings, as an expression of love, friendship and collective creativity.

The idyll didn't, of course, last. Aurenche longed for children, lapsed into depression and had a crisis about her lost Catholic faith after her mother's death. Ernst, who already had a son, was vehemently opposed to starting a family, maintaining that Aurenche was "ruining everything".

"Ernst embarked on affairs with two leading Surrealists. Aurenche became increasingly erratic"

He embarked on affairs with two leading surrealists: the Swiss artist and photographer Méret Oppenheim and the Italian painter Leonor Fini. Both women had the sense to break free of these liaisons. But Aurenche's behaviour became increasingly erratic.

When Ernst travelled to London for his first British solo exhibition at the Mayor Gallery in 1937, he at least had enough residual feeling for Aurenche to phone her and urge her to join him for the opening. But when Aurenche arrived at Victoria Station, Ernst and his friends were horrified at the drained and hollow figure limping towards them in a slashed dress, beneath which she was clearly not wearing anything else. When quizzed about her state, Aurenche muttered about being unworthy and having "defiled" herself, and begged for the services of a French-speaking Catholic priest for confession. Responding to Ernst's horror at starting a family, she had had a botched abortion that

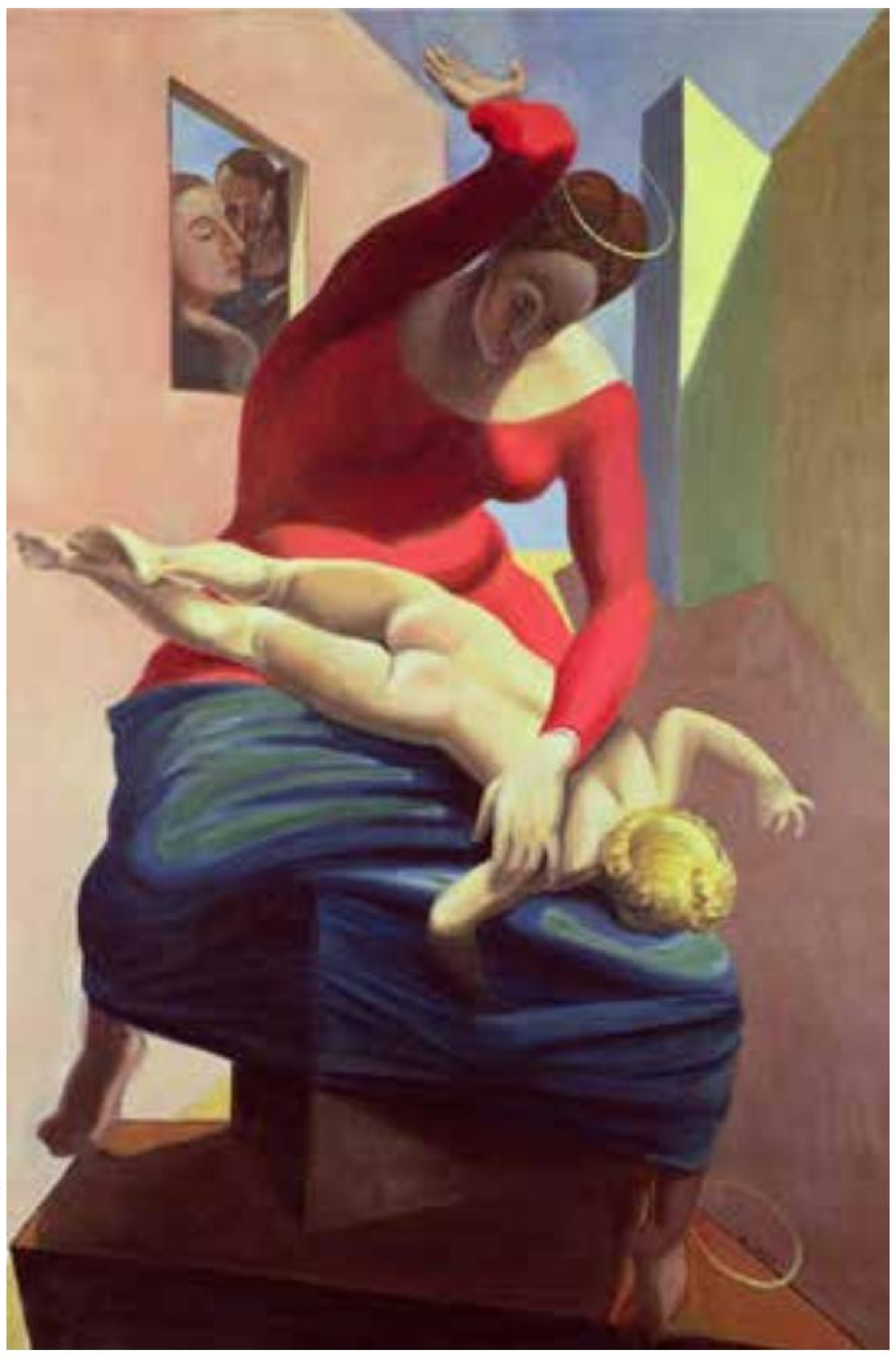


Photo: © Bridgeman Images / Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

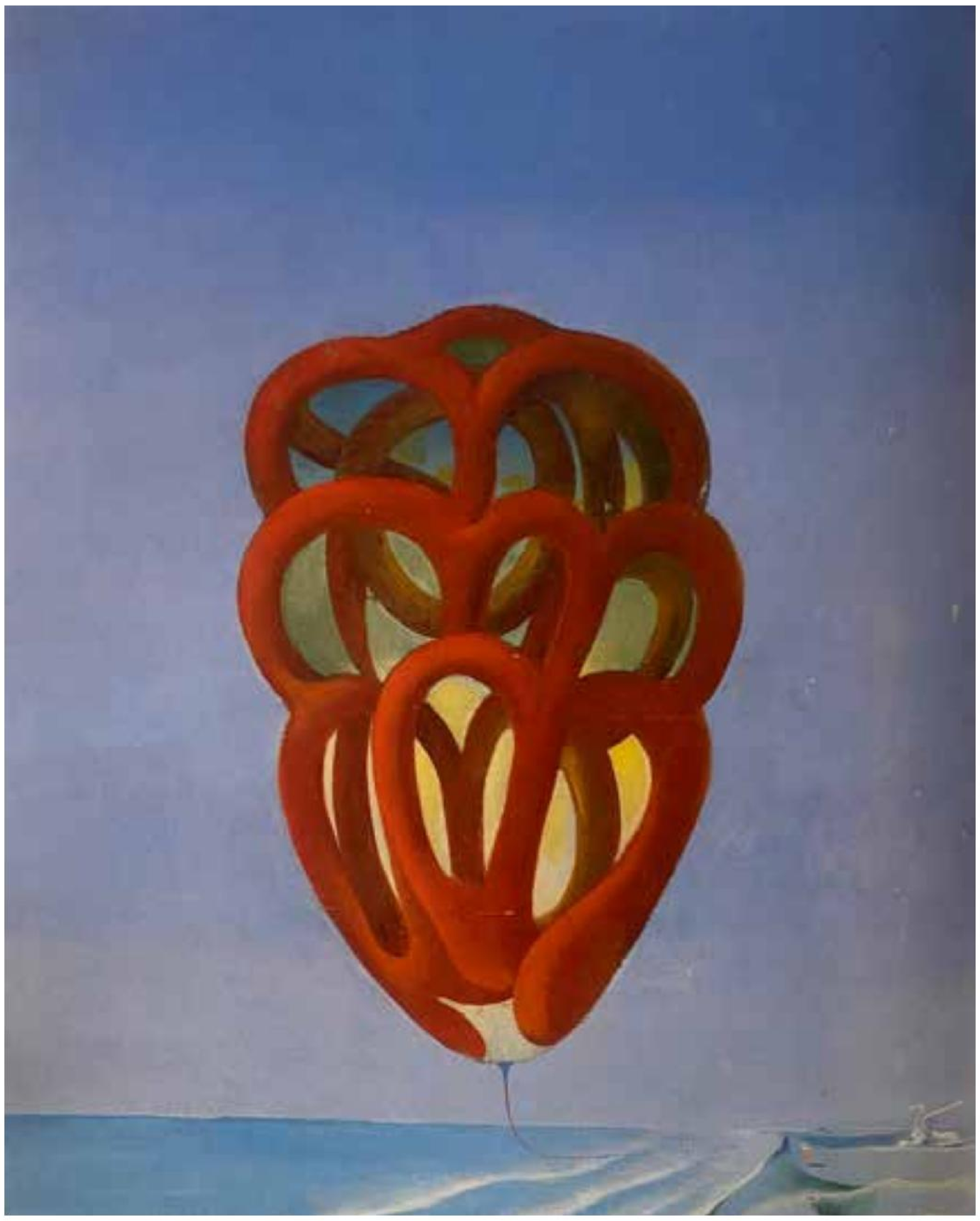


Photo: © akg-images

Top left
Max Ernst, *La Vierge corrigeant l'enfant Jésus devant trois témoins: André Breton, Paul Éluard et le peintre*, 1926

Above
Ernst and Aurenche's oil painting *Ballon-Coeur*, 1930

Left
Photograph of André Breton

destroyed her uterus, leaving her unlikely ever to have children. With her faith and future lost, she was on the verge of total collapse.

Her discovery, however, that Ernst was involved with yet another talented painter who was barely an adult, Leonora Carrington, made her fight back. There were fights in some of Paris's most famous cafés, with Aurenche throwing cups, spoons and anything else to hand. Ernst, meanwhile, pressed for a divorce in his native Germany – which is surprising given his pariah status under the Nazis as a 'degenerate' artist. Aurenche, who made two suicide attempts, would never recognise the legality of this ruling. But, either way, her relationship with Ernst was over.

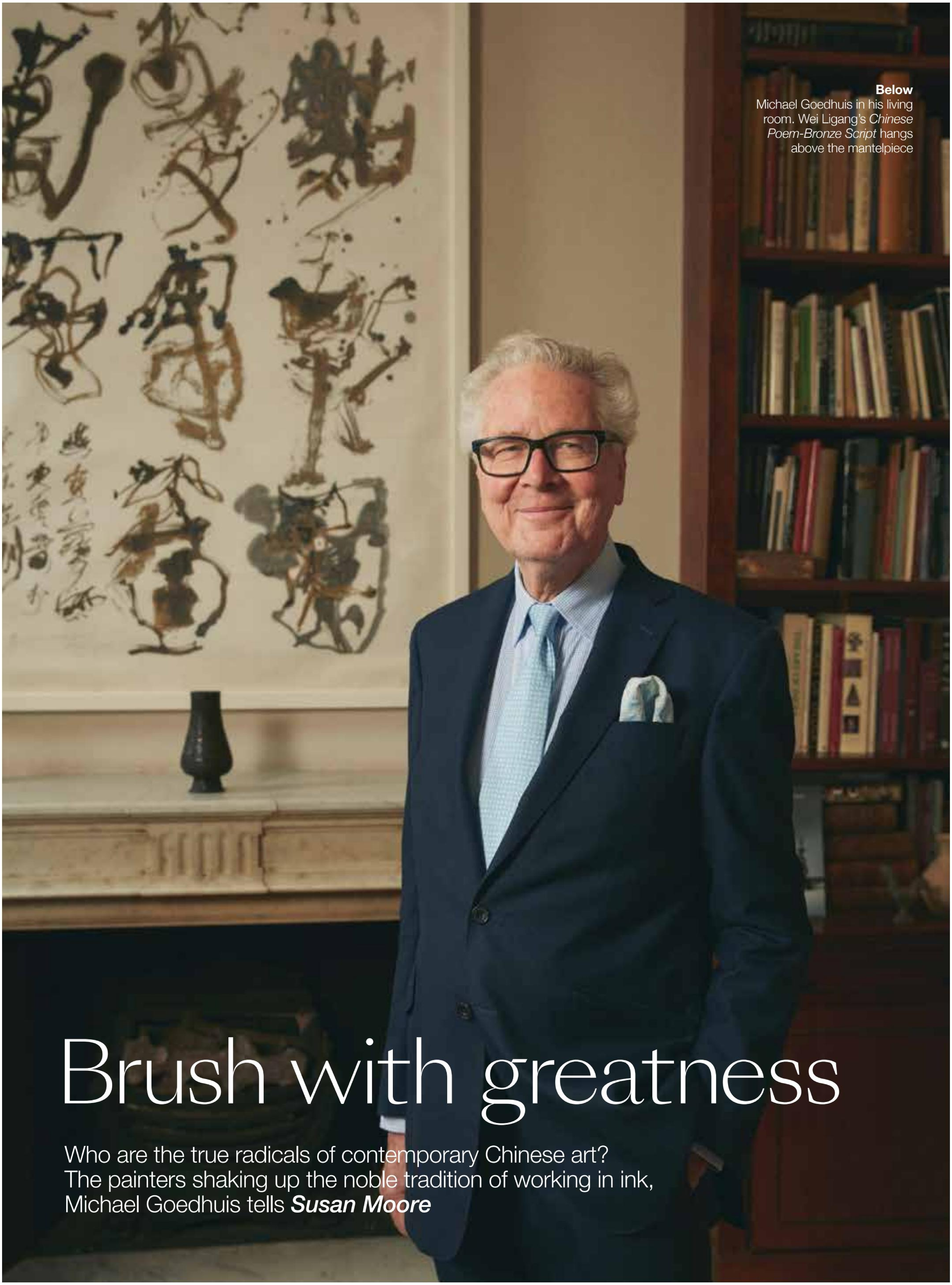
Aurenche's finest moment came in the Second World War, when she took up with the great Russian Expressionist painter Chaïm Soutine, whose principal appeal seems to have been that he was "consistently kind and gentle". She found Soutine shelter from the occupying German forces, encouraged his art and stood by him when he died of a perforated ulcer, while on the run from the Gestapo in 1943.

Aurenche herself lived on until 1960, taking unsuitable lovers, drinking too much and making one last unsuccessful attempt to prove she was still married to Ernst, before succumbing to cirrhosis of the liver – not suicide as has widely been claimed.

Aurenche's tragedy is summed up in a comment from the woman who is often regarded as her nemesis, Leonora Carrington, quoted by Margaret Hooks in *Surreal Lovers*: the suggestion that "several women in the surrealist movement had a somewhat 'crazy' persona thrust upon them by their male counterparts." Yet, for all that she had insanity effectively forced on her, Marie-Berthe Aurenche did produce at least one remarkable – and admirably sane – painting.

Mark Hudson is chief art critic of the Independent.

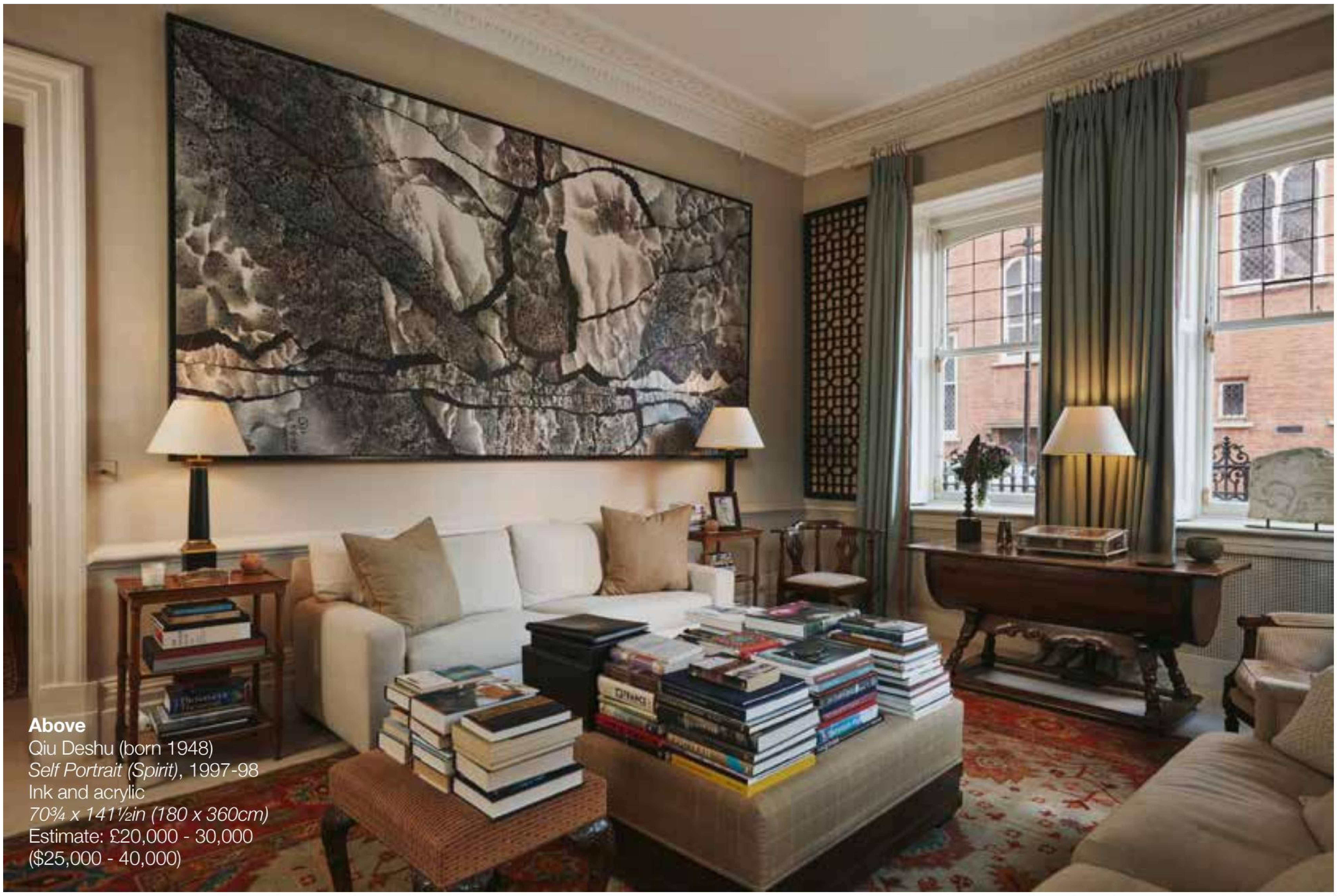
Sale: La Révolution Surréaliste
Paris
Wednesday 29 March at 2pm
Enquiries: Emilie Millon +33 (0) 1426 11010
emilie.millon@bonhams.com



Below
Michael Goedhuis in his living room. Wei Ligang's *Chinese Poem-Bronze Script* hangs above the mantelpiece

Brush with greatness

Who are the true radicals of contemporary Chinese art? The painters shaking up the noble tradition of working in ink, Michael Goedhuis tells ***Susan Moore***



Above
Qiu Deshu (born 1948)
Self Portrait (Spirit), 1997-98
Ink and acrylic
70¾ x 141½in (180 x 360cm)
Estimate: £20,000 - 30,000
($25,000 - 40,000)

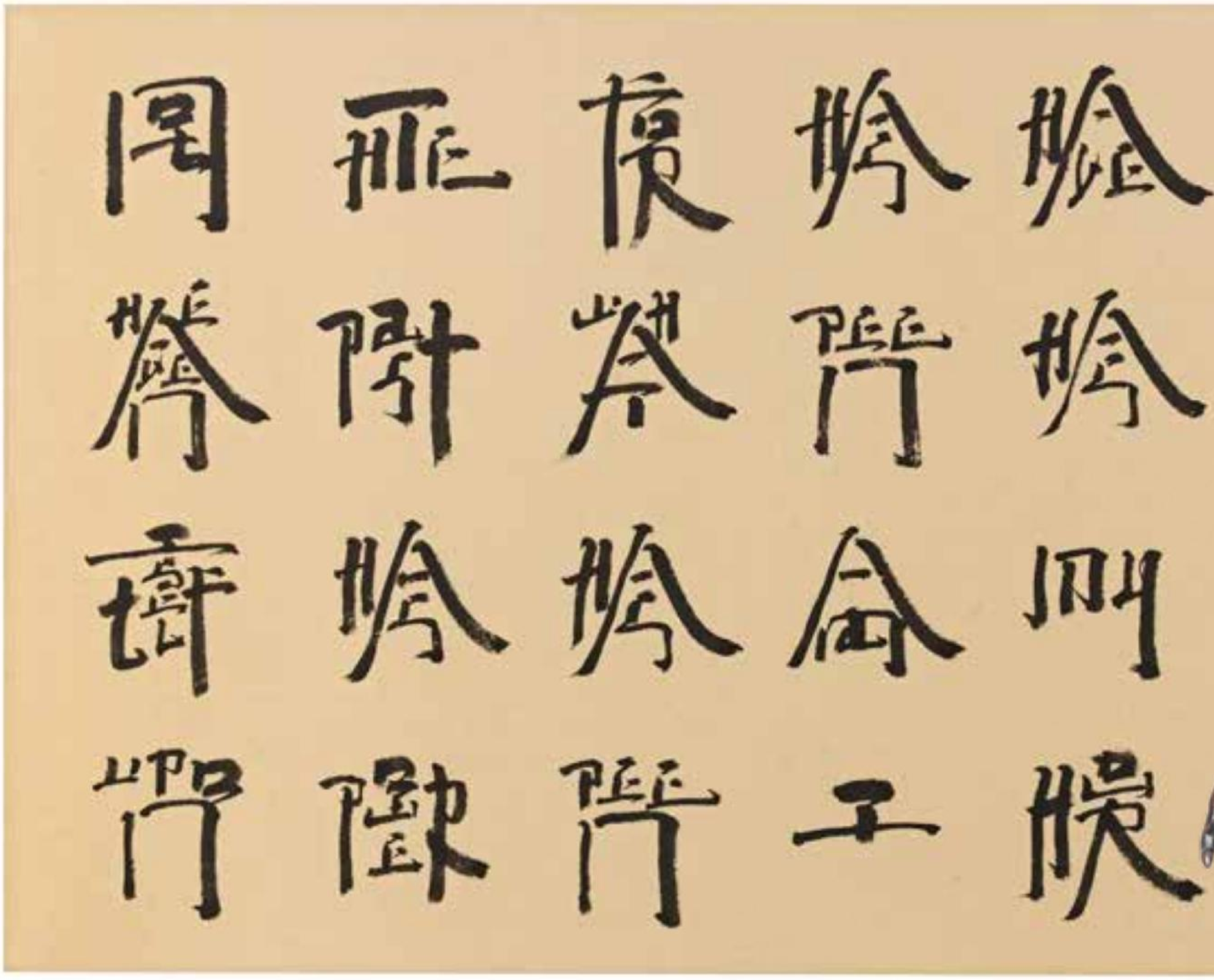
Michael Goedhuis has long been fascinated by contemporary Chinese ink painting. Perhaps this was inevitable. The Dutch-born, London-based private dealer has collected works on paper – Italian and French Old Master drawings – all his adult life. Moreover, after moving from investment banking into the art trade in 1975 – courtesy of Jacob Rothschild, who then owned leading London dealers Colnaghi – Goedhuis masterminded major sales of Persian, Mughal and Ottoman miniatures and manuscripts. All are arts of ink, pigment and brush. When Michael's focus shifted further east to China and Japan at the end of the 1980s, bronze joined ink painting as a focal interest. Now Goedhuis is drawing from his substantial collection of contemporary Chinese ink paintings and antique bronzes to offer a selection in the 'Brush and Bronze' sale at Bonhams in London in May.

> "It is the ink painters who are truly revolutionary and culturally subversive"

'Brush' refers to a select group of Chinese ink paintings by some 20 or so key artists spanning the last four decades; 'Bronze' to what Goedhuis calls China's second Bronze Age, the sculptures and vessels produced from the Song dynasty (960-1279) to the Qing (1644-1911). The two have more in common than one might expect. At the dealer's London home and office where we meet, both surround us – in all their rich diversity.

Goedhuis himself is punctilious, promptly rising to his feet as I am ushered in. Cosmopolitan, cultivated, and well and widely educated, his courtesy and charm – like his immaculate tailoring – seem pure Old World. Yet the perfect manners belie an entrepreneurial instinct that has led Goedhuis to a career seeking out and promoting the overlooked and undervalued. In 2001, he staged what he describes as the first major show of Chinese contemporary art and design in the West: 'China without Borders: Chinese Contemporary Art', which drew 2,800 visitors to the opening night at Sotheby's New York. On behalf of four investors, he went on to amass, exhibit and publish a second significant group of more than 250 works, the Estella Collection – he was reading Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* at the time of its inception.

Both exhibitions included dissident artists active in or outside China. They were artists who had embraced the Western idioms of oil painting, video, conceptual and performance art, Ai Weiwei, Cai Guo-Qiang, Zeng Fanzhi and Zhang Xiaogang among them. "These overtly political artists were heralded as brave and subversive, but



Above
Xu Bing (b.1955)
Happy the Man, 2019
Ink on paper, framed
60cm long x 100cm wide
(23½in long x 39½in wide)
Estimate: £30,000 - 50,000
($36,000 - 60,000)

Right
A rare and important silver-inlaid bronze figure of Guanyin
He Chaozong four-character mark, Ming Dynasty
60cm (23½in) high
Estimate: £100,000 - 200,000
($120,000 - 250,000)

> "These artists are not afraid to take account of the past in order to make sense of the present"

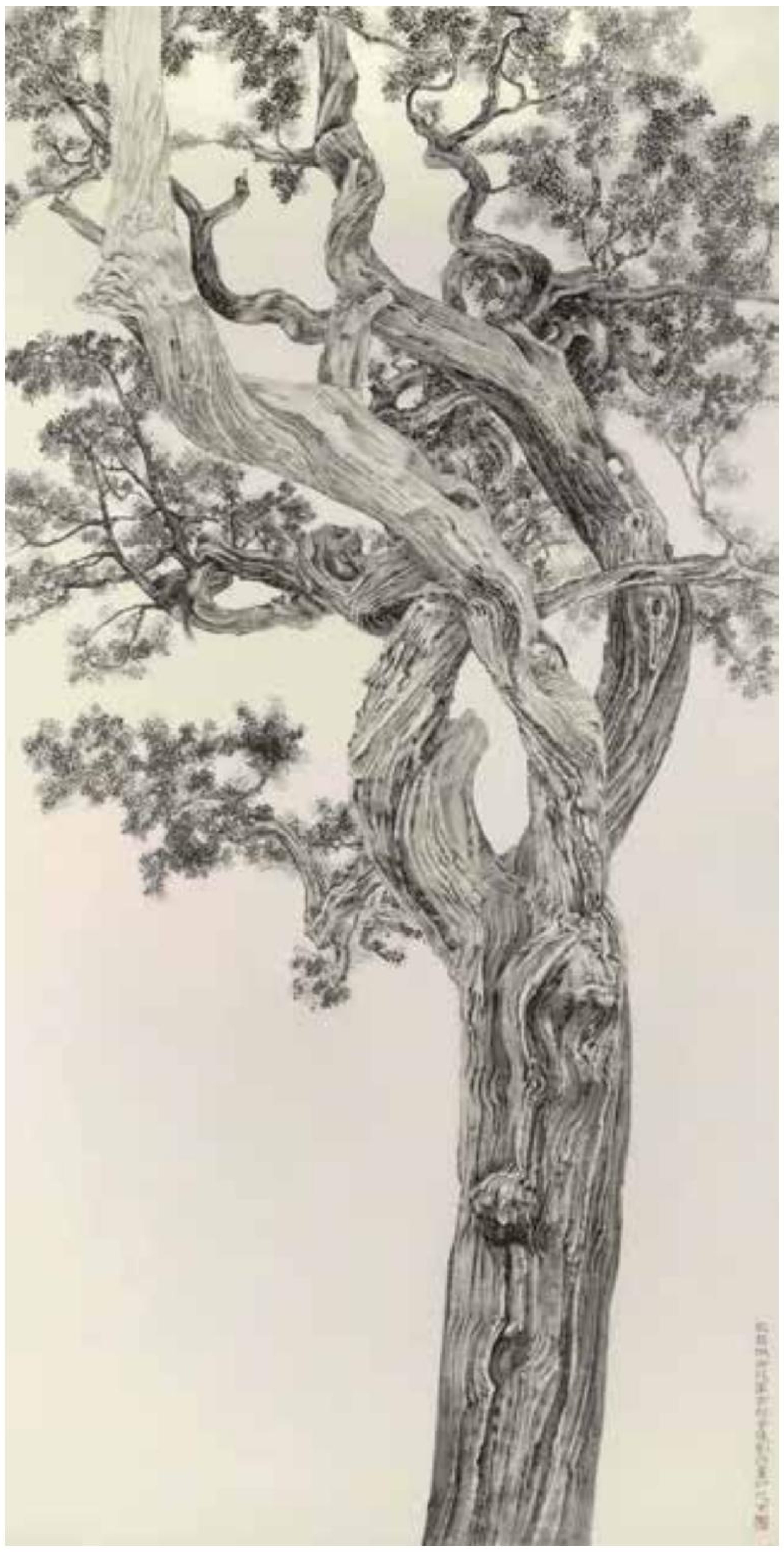
their work was primarily intended for a Western audience and art market," Goedhuis explains. "It is the progressive ink painters who are truly revolutionary and culturally subversive. They are the most idealistic and intellectually daring of all contemporary Chinese artists."

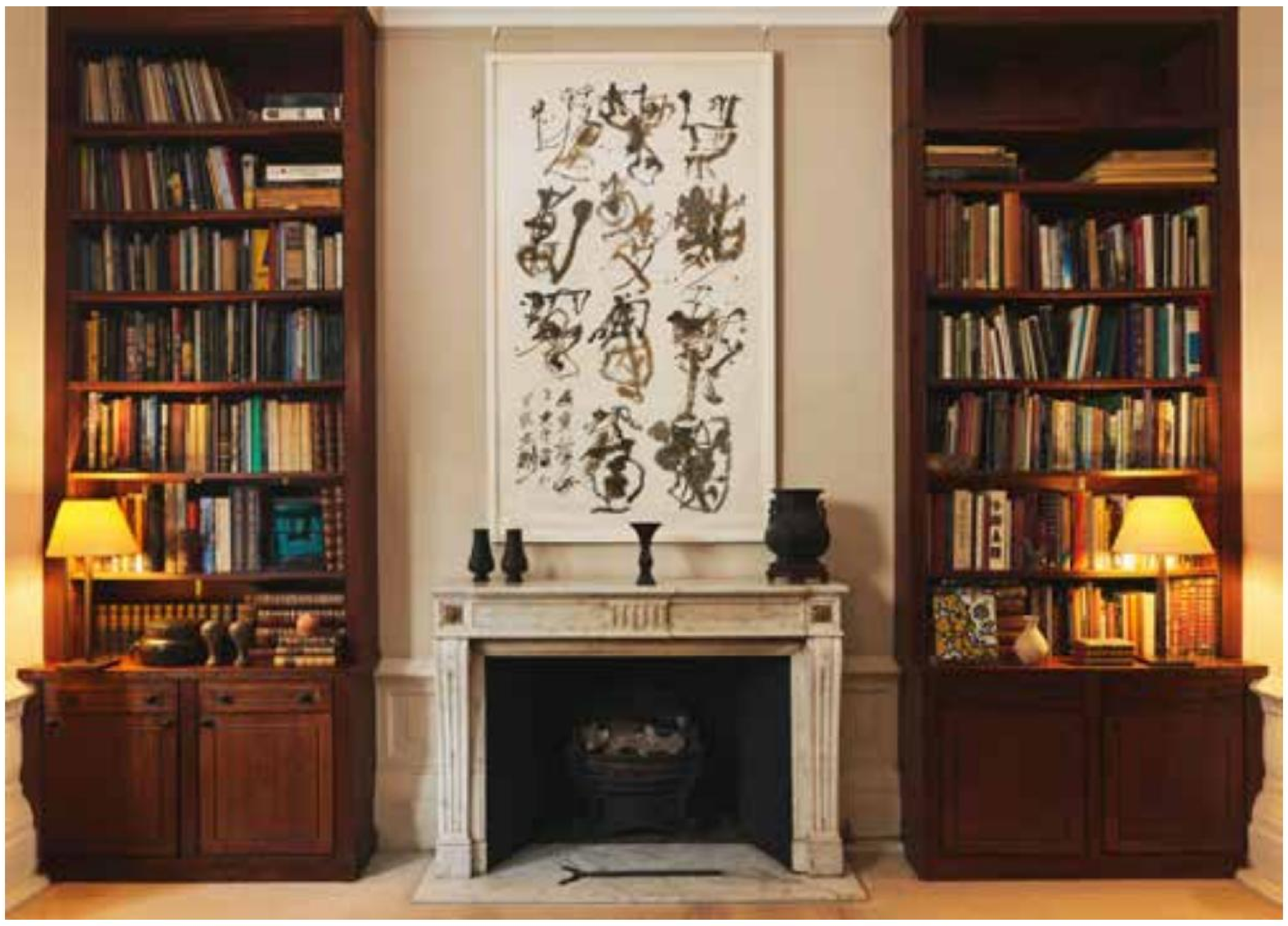
He sees these painters as the successors to the 'literati', the gentleman-scholars who, for centuries, practised the pre-eminent Chinese art of calligraphy, and its associated arts of painting, poetry and music, as a means of self-expression and cultivation. "Just as Picasso, Braque and Cézanne studied the Old Masters in order to create a new pictorial language in the early 20th century, these ink painters connected with literati culture to formulate fresh, new work that is relevant to, and meaningful for, the world of today," he explains.

Some, like fastidious Liu Dan, take traditional motifs, carefully source the highest-quality traditional materials, then use them to explode the boundaries of Chinese ink painting: his expressively gnarled tree in *Old Cypress from the Forbidden City* (2007) is isolated from its landscape for scrutiny in obsessive and painstaking detail.

Li Huayi's meditative misty mountains, *Landscape* (2010-11), draw on Northern Song dynasty paintings but emerge out of the serendipity of splashed ink. The iconoclastic Wei Ligang similarly plays with traditional calligraphy, abstracting characters to break the structures of text, with *Chinese Poem-Bronze Script* (2020) introducing colour and figurative detail.

"Other works do not look like ink paintings," says Goedhuis, gesturing to Qiu Deshu's monumental ink and acrylic *Self Portrait (Spirit)* of 1997-98 behind him on the sofa. Qiu, a former Red Guard, was severely censored after founding in Shanghai in 1980 the Grass Grass group of artists, which promoted independence and originality. His signature technique of 'fissuring' evolved during this dark period. Working with often vivid colours, he literally deconstructed and reconstructed ink painting by tearing and collaging his paper, the lines – gaps or fissures between the sheets – becoming a metaphor for the cracks in the human soul and in society. "These





Left
Liu Dan (born 1953)
Old Cypress from the Forbidden City, 2007
Ink on Xuan paper
102 x 54in (259.1 x 137.2cm)
Estimate: £200,000 - 300,000
($250,000 - 400,000)

Above
Hanging over the mantelpiece:
Wei Ligang (born 1964)
Chinese Poem-Bronze Script, 2010
Ink and acrylic on paper
70¾ x 37¾in (180 x 96cm)
Estimate: £8,000 - 10,000
($10,000 - 13,000)

artists were not afraid to take account of the past in order to make sense of the present," Goedhuis declares emphatically. Many of them work in several media.

It is the 'literati' tradition that connects the Goedhuis bronze sculptures and vessels to the ink paintings. These intimate, domestic bronzes were first produced for the studios of the gentlemen-scholars, initially inspired by the complex and mysterious archaic ritual wine and food vessels that began to be excavated during the Song period. Unlike those objects, made several thousand years earlier, these later vessels tended towards pleasingly simple forms. Like ink painting and calligraphy, however, they were admired not only in their own right, but for the train of poetic and intellectual associations they evoked.

"It is a totally fascinating but long-neglected field," enthuses Goedhuis, who staged a pioneering exhibition and accompanying publication, *Chinese and Japanese Bronzes, AD 1100-1900,* at Colnaghi Oriental in London in 1989. "It is only recently that the great historic collections in the West – such as the V&A in London and the Musée Cernuschi in Paris – have begun to research and publish their holdings. Museum interest is growing in these later bronzes, but they remain really good value."

While the earliest pieces in the sale include a garlic-mouth *hu,* a spare, pear-shaped wine vessel, from the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), the lion's share dates to the Song, Ming and Qing. Arguably the grandest and most distinguished of the sculptures is the rare and early, signed and silver-inlaid figure of the Buddhist bodhisattva Guanyin, standing on a cloud-scroll base.

"The Bonhams sale is a way for me to do two things," concludes Goedhuis. "One is to reach an audience I do not know. The second is to promote and ignite interest in these two fields." He continues: "I would like to help raise the appreciation of contemporary Chinese ink artists for a new generation."

His secret weapon in reaching a younger audience may well be the multi-talented Tim Yip. Although best known as an award-winning designer and art director for film, opera, ballet and theatre – he won both an Oscar and a BAFTA for his work on Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* – Yip trained as a photographer in Hong Kong and has maintained an ever-evolving visual art practice throughout his career. Fittingly, his work is grounded in traditional Chinese art and philosophy and Goedhuis, who has previously exhibited Yip's works on paper, will unveil a new artwork by the artist specially for the sale.

Susan Moore writes for the Financial Times.

Sale: Michael Goedhuis: Brush and Bronze
New Bond Street, London
Thursday 18 May
Enquiries: Asaph Hyman +44 (0) 20 7468 5888
asaph.hyman@bonhams.com

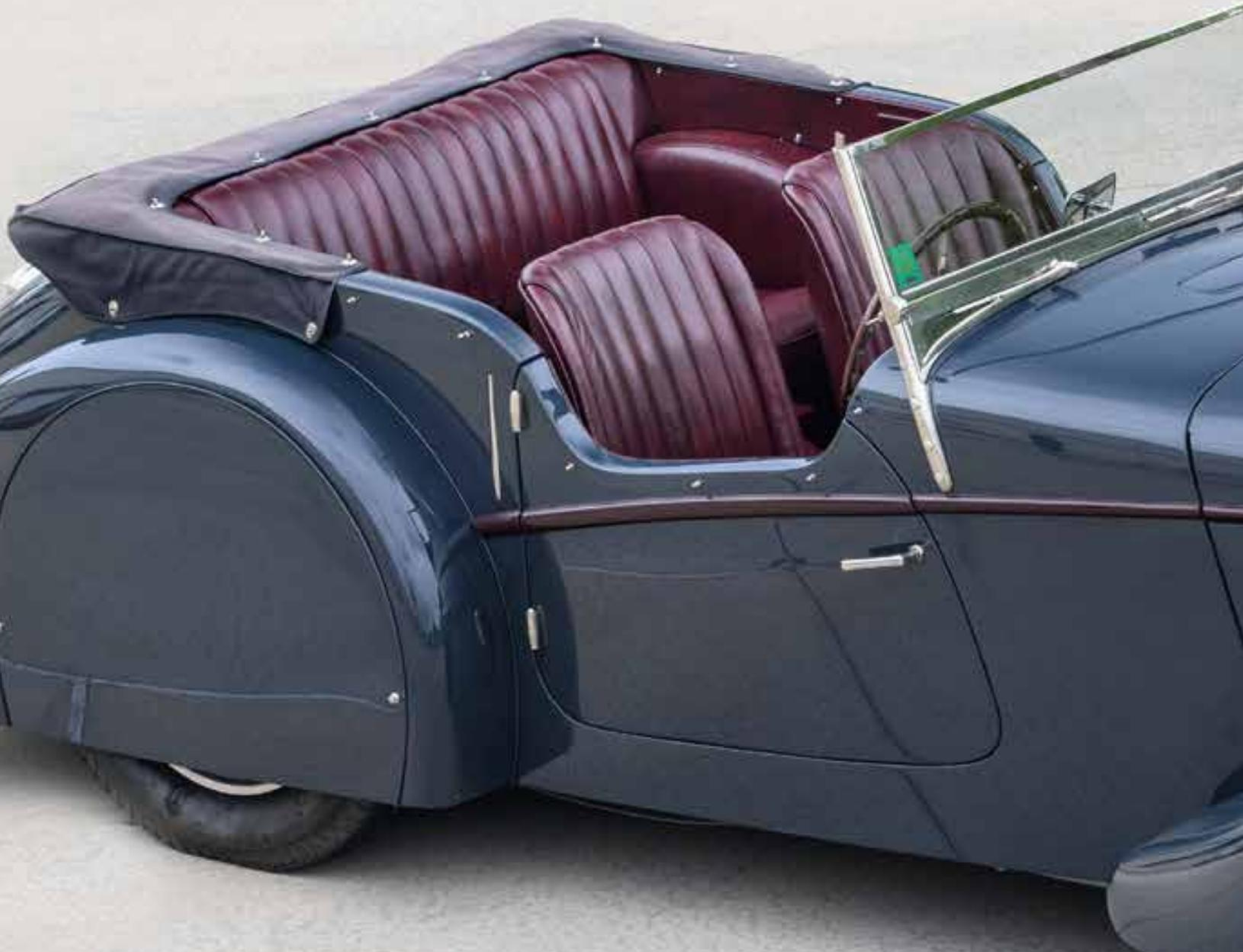
Driven man

Other manufacturers only saw a mechanical conundrum, but Ettore Bugatti seized on the chance to make motor cars into modern works of art. **Neil Lyndon** sighs in appreciation

A current of art flows through the whole history of the Bugatti marque in the first decades of the 20th century. It reached its high watermark in the 57S super-sports car of the late 1930s.

Most of the greatest car-makers of that earliest automotive age – Charles Rolls, W.O. Bentley and August Duesenberg among them – were fired up by the prospect of overcoming knotty engineering problems. By contrast, Ettore Bugatti, founder of the house of that name, had art running in his veins and he applied it to everything he created – from surgical instruments and table cutlery to some of the most glorious cars of the age.

Born in Milan in 1881, Ettore was the son of Carlo, one of Italy's leading designers of furniture and jewellery. Ettore's grandfather had been an architect and sculptor. His aunt was married to the painter Giovanni Segantini. His brother became a sculptor. We can, therefore, be reasonably certain that when conversation in the Bugatti family household turned to the horseless carriages that



Above
An unsurpassed beauty:
A 1937 Bugatti Type 57S Sports Tourer
Chassis no. 57541 Engine no. 29S,
complete with original coach work and
finished with award-winning restoration.
Estimate: $10,000,000 -12,000,000
(£8,500,000 - 10,000,000)

were then making their earliest appearance in the world, arguments about spark plugs and valve clearances would not have predominated.

Ettore did undertake a conventional engineering apprenticeship, but he mopped it up with such alacrity that the Milanese manufacturers Prinetti & Stucchi were actually producing his first car – the four-engined Bugatti Type 1 – in 1899, when Ettore was just 18. Nobody in the history of cars ever exhibited more startling precocity.

> “Ettore Bugatti was actually producing his first car... in 1899, when he was just 18”

By 1909, Ettore had established his own company, Automobiles E. Bugatti, in Molsheim in the Alsace. That German town would remain Bugatti’s base, effectively until the outbreak of the Second World War, though its patron and his company assumed a largely French identity. From their factory issued a stream of the fastest and most technologically advanced cars of the age. None was ever less than beautiful. That was simply a given.

From the 1920s, Bugattis took a commanding position in the developing field of motor-racing, with a Bugatti driven to victory by William Grover-Williams in the first-ever Monaco Grand Prix in 1929. Also around that time, Bugattis were locked in all-out war with Bentleys in sports car races right across Europe. Bugattis triumphed in Sicily’s Targa Florio – the world’s hardest and most dangerous road race – every year from 1925 to 1929. To Ettore’s uncontainable exasperation, however, Bentley won four consecutive Le Mans 24-hour races 1927-1930. He was far from enchanted by the armoured-car looks and ferocious supercharged technology of the Bentleys. “The fastest lorries in the world,” he called them.

He may have been such a sore loser because he had little experience of those pains. On Grand Prix circuits, Bugattis proved unsurpassable. In the hands of drivers like Louis Chiron and Pierro Taruffi, the immortal Type 35 won more than 2,000 races in the 1930s. If Tazio Nuvolari – the greatest driver of the age – had been persuaded to drive Bugattis rather than his beloved Alfa Romeos, Ettore would probably have waltzed home with every trophy.

Taking advantage of their racing dominance, Ettore and his son Jean also turned out a series of ultra-desirable production cars from the factory in Molsheim. Their most exclusive was the Type 41, known as the ‘Royale’.

Above
Punctilious, rude – and a visionary designer: Ettore Bugatti at the wheel in 1926

Above right
Ettore and his son Jean, who would take over the company from his father in 1934

Right
The Bugatti is restored to the highest condition, complete with racing red leather seats.

Designed expressly for monarchs and heads of state, this extraordinary conveyance was meant to teach Rolls-Royce and Duesenberg a lesson in how to create a massive luxury car. It was to be of such beauty and elegance that grown men would prostrate themselves in adoration at the mere sight.

More than 21ft long and weighing more than three tons, the Royale was exquisite from its horseshoe-shaped radiator grille (surmounted by a radiator cap in the shape of a rearing elephant, designed by Ettore's sculptor brother Rembrandt) and walnut steering-wheel to its whalebone control knobs. With a basic chassis price of $30,000 (equivalent to more than half a million dollars today), the Royale was adamantly uncompromising in its approach to potential customers.

Those punters were, however, suffering unusual privations in the royal purse. Just at the moment the Royale made its shimmering debut appearance in the spotlight, the world economy took its steepest-ever nosedive. The Great Depression wiped out not just Wall Street stockbrokers but also crowned heads all over Europe. Of the 25 cars Ettore had planned to build, seven were constructed and only three were sold.

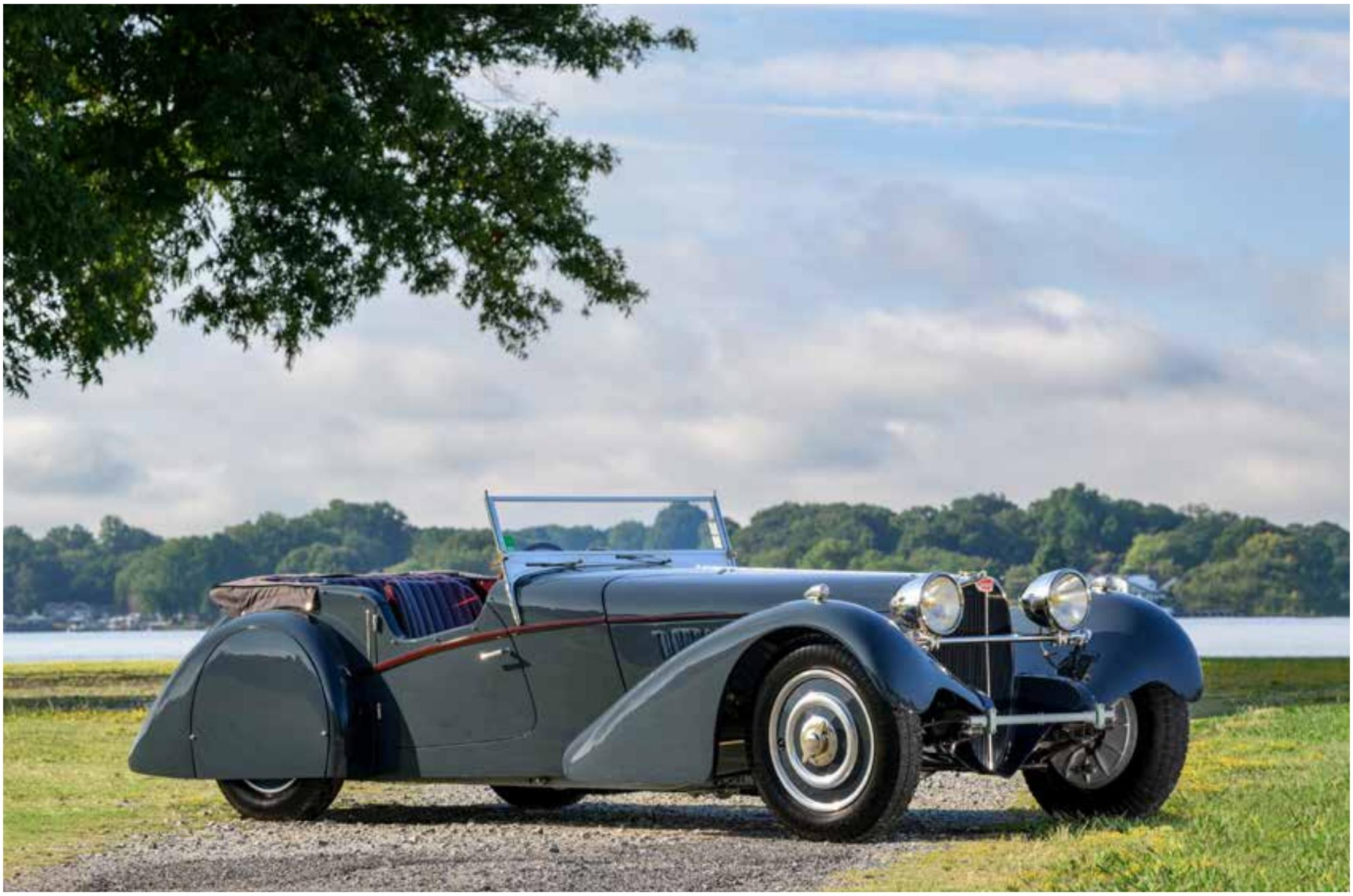
Ettore didn't do himself any commercial favours in his approach to customer relations. He refused to sell a Royale to one king because he was affronted by that sovereign's table manners. To another customer, who complained that he found his Type 35 difficult to start on chilly mornings, Bugatti barked "Surely a man who can afford a Type 35 can afford a heated garage?"

Deportment at table mattered so much to Ettore that he designed his own cutlery. Its abiding beauty and functionality are matched by the surgical instruments he also designed, still used by some medical departments. Punctilious in all things, he was dissatisfied with the terriers he bought, so he started breeding his own. Irked by the appearance and performance of trains in Molsheim, he knocked some out to his own design.

In 1934, Automobiles E. Bugatti underwent a decisive shift when Jean, Ettore's son, became the company's leader and driving force. One of his first creations was the two-seater Type 57, which became the most fabulous road-going Bugatti of all. The world land-speed record-holder Sir Malcolm Campbell said of the Type 57: "If I was asked to give my opinion as to the best all-round super-sports car on the market today, I should say, without any hesitation whatever, it was the Type 57 Bugatti."

> "Bugatti barked, 'Surely a man who can afford a Type 35 can afford a heated garage?'"

Originally fitted with a smaller version of the Royale's flat-bottomed horseshoe grille, the Type 57's swooping lines – like a swallow in flight – set the model that Jaguar, Bentley and Mercedes laboured to follow. With a 3.3-litre dual overhead camshaft straight eight-cylinder engine, the Type 57 was astoundingly fast. Jean drove one the 475km from Molsheim to Paris in 3 hours and 55 minutes.



Google Maps gives that journey time today, on modern roads, as 4 hours 47 minutes.

The pinnacle of Type 57 production – which continued until 1939 – was the Type 57S, which is the car offered by Bonhams at the Amelia Island auction in March.

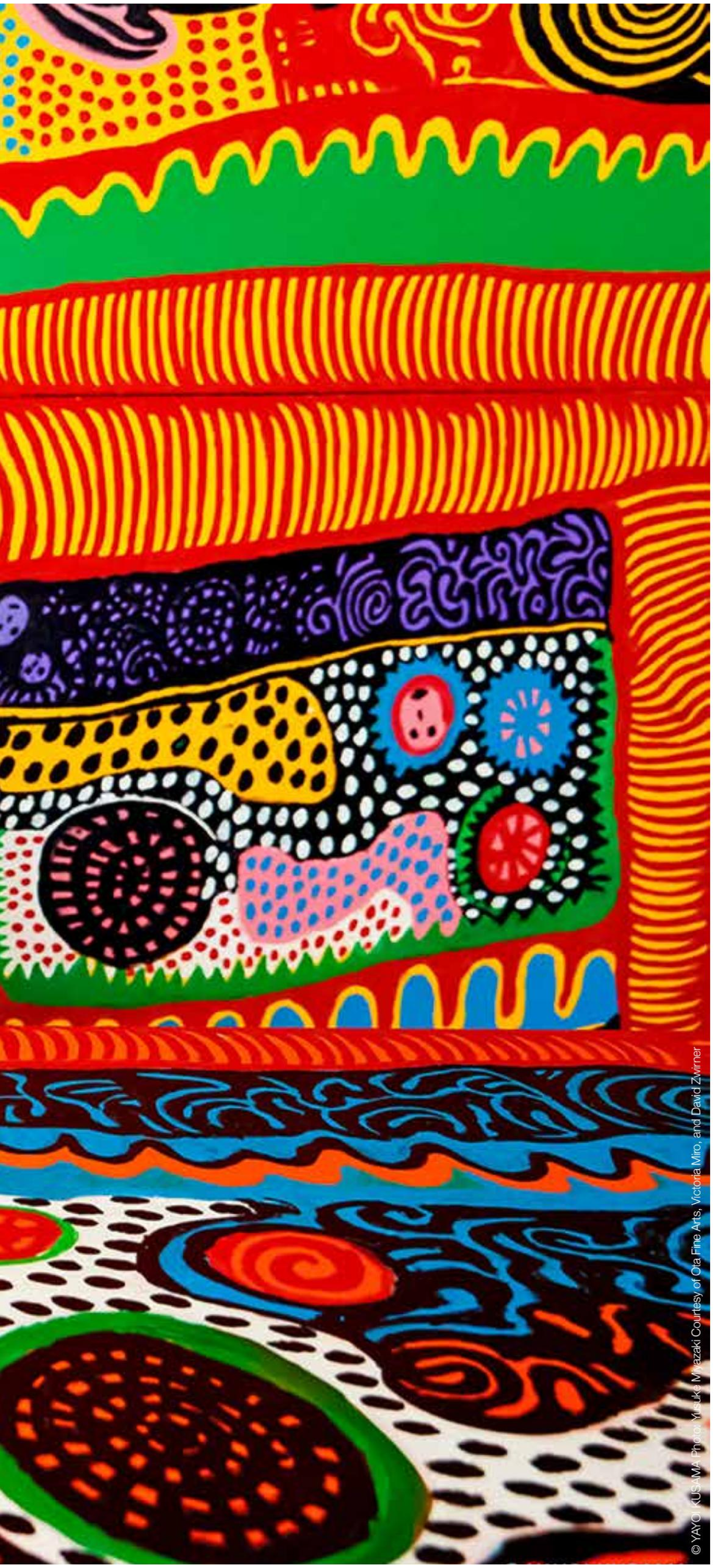
The 'S' stood for *surbaissé* or 'lowered'. A shorter wheelbase, with the rear axle passing through the frame, made the Type 57S virtually a Grand Prix car in touring car guise. To mark it out further from the standard Type 57, the S had a V-shaped radiator. When Bugatti thumbed their noses at Bentley and added a supercharger, the Type 57S became the fastest road-going car in the world – with not a trace of lorry in its being.

A mere 48 Type 57S chassis were built before the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. Rarest of the rare, a tiny handful were handed over to outside coachbuilders. They included chassis number 57541, the one that is offered here, which went in 1937 to Carrosserie Van den Plas, who gave it a four-seat touring body.

Given a comprehensive restoration by its latest owner – including painting in period nitrocellulose lacquer, using cotton-based materials for the top and refitting original Molsheim fasteners and hardware – this 57541 can now legitimately be regarded as unsurpassed among works of automotive art in the 20th century.

Neil Lyndon is a writer and journalist.

Sale: Amelia Island, Florida
Thursday 2 March
Enquiries: Rupert Banner +1 212 461 6515
rupert.banner@bonhams.com



© YAYOI KUSAMA Photo: Yusuke Miyazaki Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner

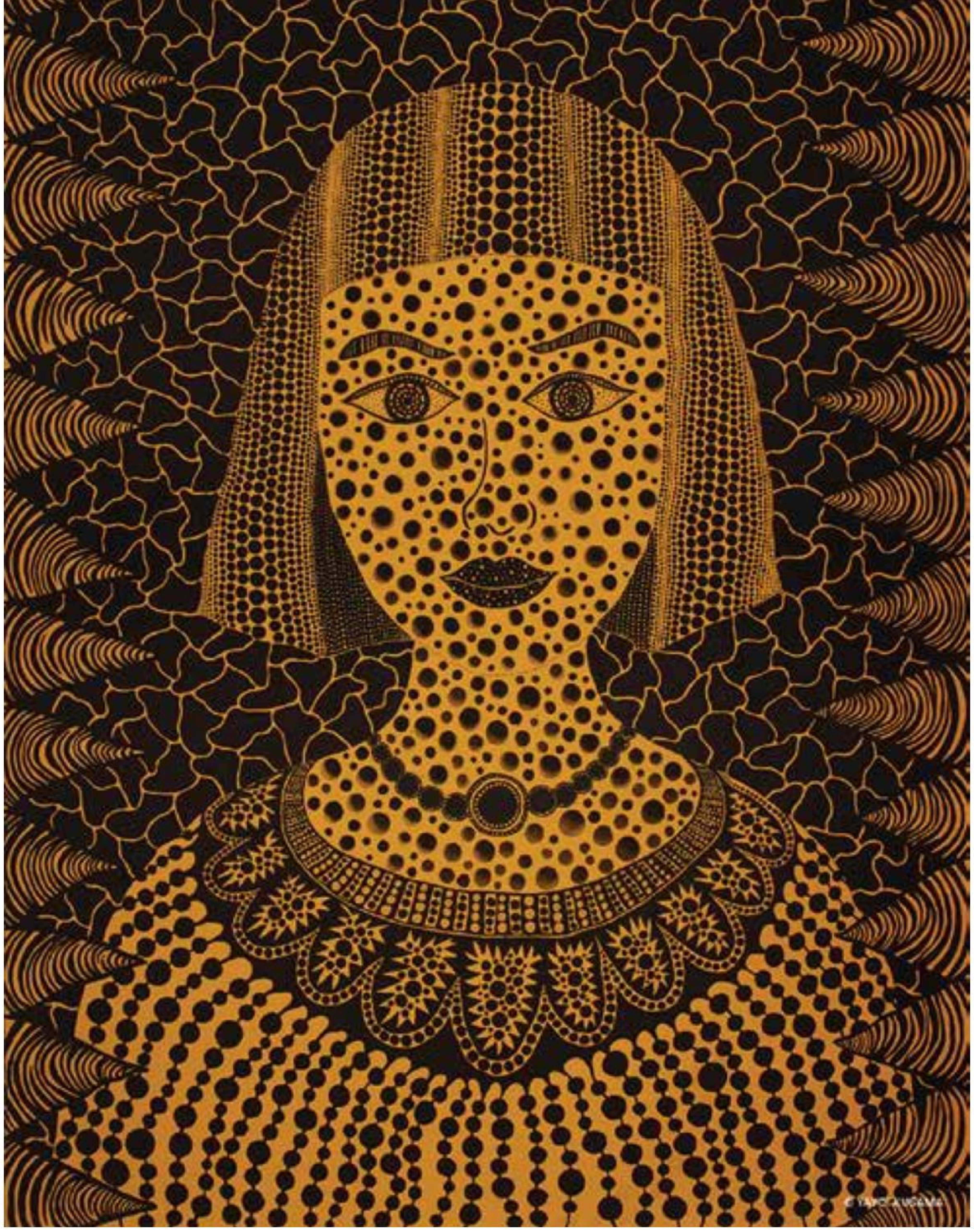
Left
The artist's creative life force is poured into her art: Yayoi Kusama Photo: Yusuke Miyazaki Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner

Joining the dots

Out of mental anguish, Yayoi Kusama somehow created some of the most delightful, meditative and terrifying works in contemporary art. Michele Chan charts a path through them

The exhibition is a sprawling Tim Burton wonderland. M+'s *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now,* jointly curated by Doryun Chong, Chief Curator at M+, and independent curator Mika Yoshitake, features more than 200 works. It is encyclopaedic, densely hung – the largest-ever survey of Kusama's work in terms of physical footprint – and will test the limits of how much visual, sensual, and mental stimulation you can withstand. For almost 80 years, Kusama has been cross-wiring eccentricity with grand spectacle, and the adrenaline-charged gusto of Chong's debut special exhibition keeps pace with the artist's compulsions. It hurtles from obsessive introspection to uplifting splendour to the downright creepy. If any of the grimmer works, often bearing desolate titles, threatens to overwhelm, the next shiny, spiky, or soft and squishy thing soon catches the eye – saving sensitive souls from toppling down the rabbit hole of existential despair.

That the show is such an exhilarating ride is due in large part to the curatorial structure. In contrast to past surveys that have predominantly been chronological, *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now* frames Kusama's extensive career within six themes, slicing through critical moments in her career to spread them spatially across the exhibition. 'Infinity' traces the rise and development of her *Infinity Nets,* while 'Accumulation' bears witness



© YAYOI KUSAMA

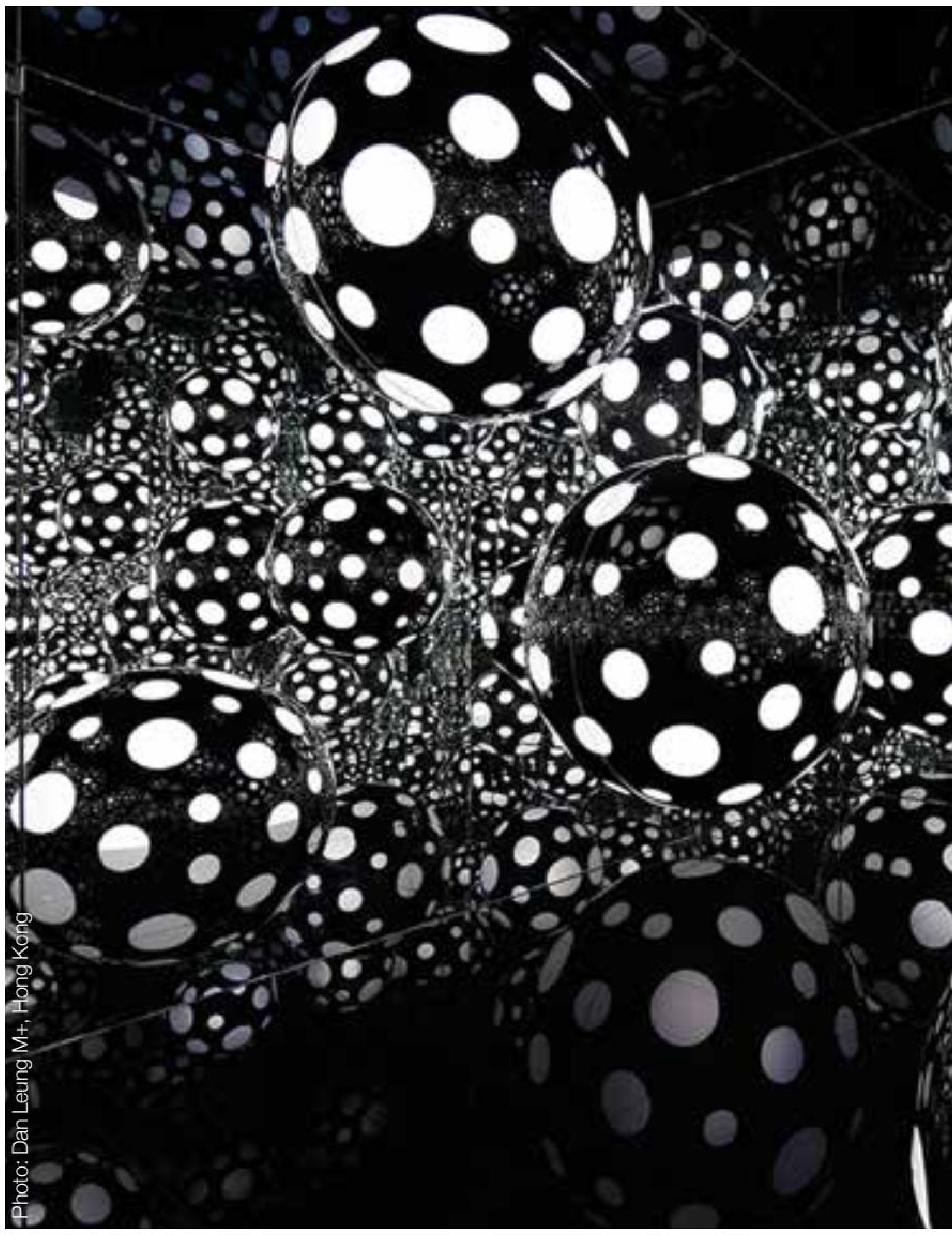


Photo: Dan Leung M+, Hong Kong

to the morphing and mutating of Kusama's iconic soft sculptures and mixed media works over the decades; these sections are undercut by Kusama's philosophies of self-obliteration and interconnectivity. 'Radical Connectivity' presents archival material of performances and film collaborations, including never-before exhibited videos of performances from the 1980s, 'Biocosmic' draws attention to the simultaneous earthly and cosmic nature of Kusama's distinctive forms, while the last sections, 'Death' and 'Force of Life', juxtapose Kusama's lifelong struggles with depressive and suicidal tendencies with her vital creative life force, which ultimately – and repeatedly – triumphs.

"The thematic structure allows for the presentation of a more complex chronology," explains Chong, "and a more three-dimensional understanding of Kusama's life and work." Each section contains its own inbuilt chronological narrative, while simultaneously interlinking with the next. As a result, there is an overall cyclical feel, a sense of recurrence. This is a show that demands not only close and slow viewing, but also second and third and fourth viewings, inviting visitors down many a path less travelled through Kusama's vast and multifaceted oeuvre.

"Within each theme, we discover a pattern of breakthrough and return," Chong continues. "Throughout her career, Kusama would experience creative breakthroughs, and consequently arrive at a ground-breaking new concept or form. The best example is her *Infinity Nets* from the late 1950s and early 1960s. She created these classical *Infinity Nets* for a few years and then stopped in the latter part of the 1960s. Then she returned in the 1980s, stopped again, and returned in the 1990s, and so on. Breakthrough and return – the pattern repeats and overlaps across the six themes."

> "Kusama would experience creative breakthroughs… arriving at a ground-breaking new concept or form"

One of the most recent *Infinity Nets* on view is a panoramic multi-panelled work, aglow with techno-coloured hues. Displayed in the same room as the canonical New York period *Infinity Nets*, in all their monochromatic austerity, the presentation does not exalt the early creations over the later.

In the adjacent 'Accumulation' section, the phallic covered armchair *Accumulation No. 1*, which Kusama made in 1962 in her Manhattan loft in the same downtown building as the studio of her friend and fellow artist Claes Oldenburg, is positioned directly opposite

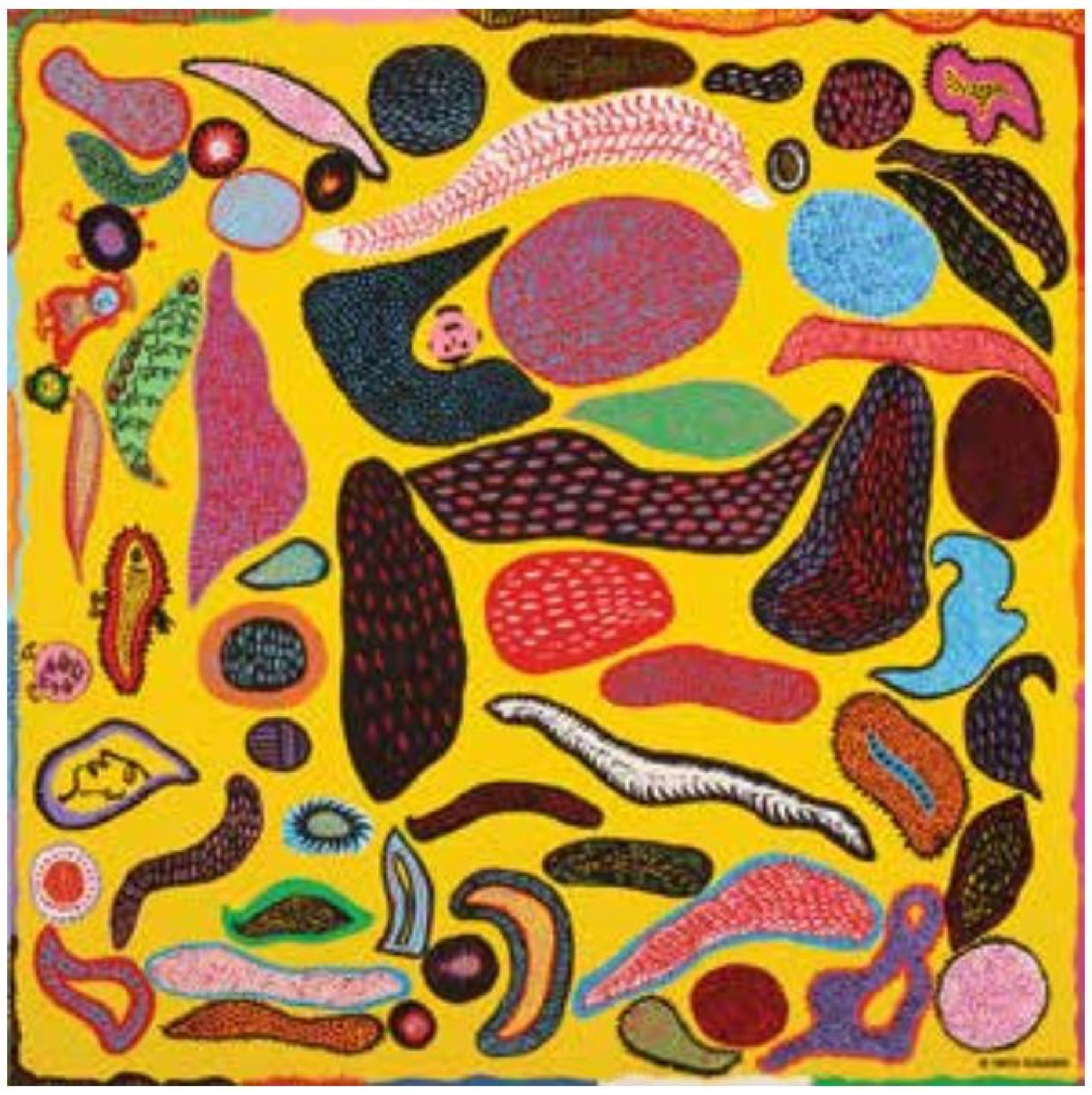
Photo: Winnie Yeung @ Visual Voices Courtesy of M+, Hong Kong

Right
Doryun Chong, Chief Curator, M+ and co-curator of *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now*

Opposite left
Her vital creative life force ultimately triumphs: Yayoi Kusama's *Portrait* 2015 Collection of Amoli Foundation Ltd.

Far left
A microcosmos in and of itself: the installation view of *Dots Obsession – Aspiring to Heaven's Love* (2022) at *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now, 2022*

Below
A colourful celebration of intermingling organic forms: Yayoi Kusama's *Pound of Repose* 2014 Collection of the artist Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner



© YAYOI KUSAMA

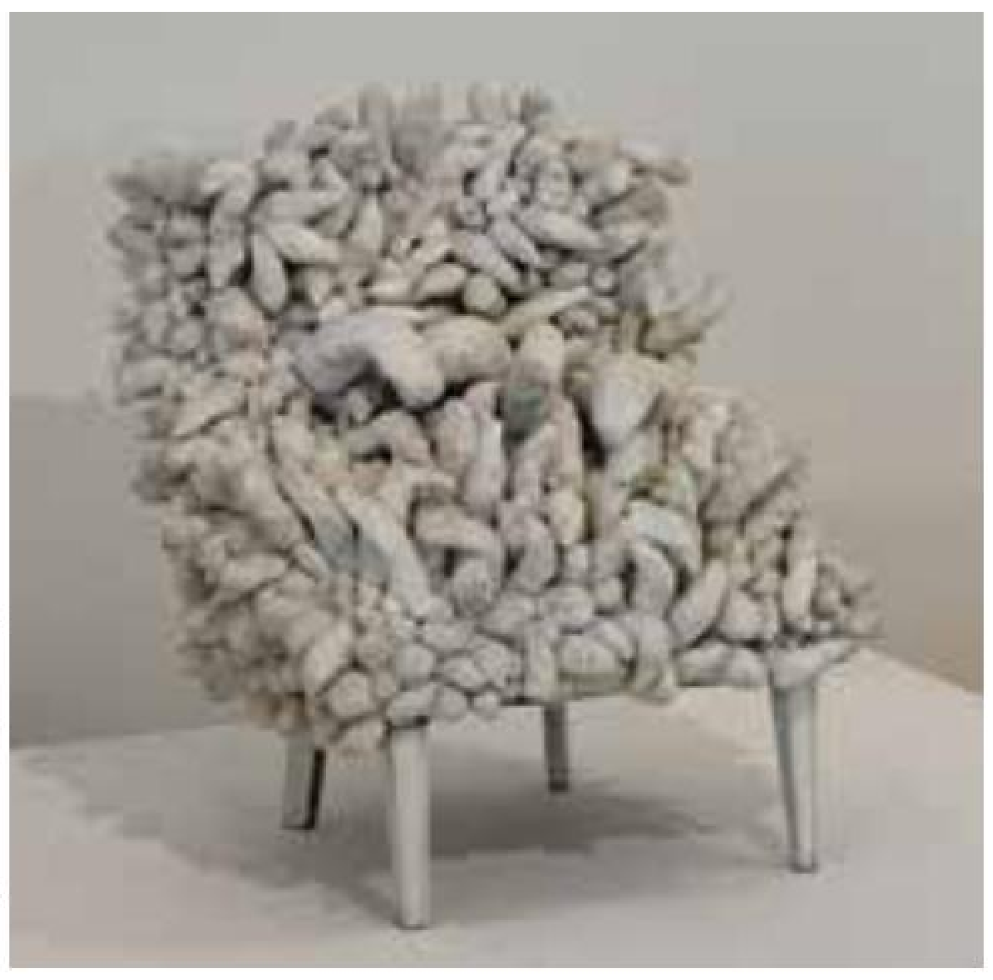
Shooting Stars (1992), a monumental configuration of 84 mixed-media boxes with silver spiky outgrowths, exhibited in her solo presentation in the Japan Pavilion at the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993. The mixed-chronological presentation is deliberate, says Chong. While previous retrospectives have tended to focus principally on Kusama's 15 years in New York, *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now* rebalances the narrative, giving equal emphasis to all periods in her career.

"The two decades bracketed by Kusama's return to Japan in 1973 and her re-emergence on the international stage at the 1993 Venice Biennale is probably the least well-known," says Chong, "but it is arguably the most important and critical phase in Kusama's life." After making a potent yet all-too-brief mark on the New York art scene in the 1960s, Kusama grew increasingly disillusioned and unstable towards the end of the decade. In 1973, triggered in part by the death of her close friend and partner Joseph Cornell, Kusama returned to Japan after a decade and a half abroad. After a suicide attempt following the death of her father in 1974, she checked herself into a psychiatric hospital in Tokyo in 1975. Here Kusama began to rebuild her mental stability by creating art. The 1970s to 1980s were extraordinary years that gave birth to extraordinary works: plagued by grief, mental illness, rejection from the Japanese art world, and lack of support from her family, Kusama turned to new mediums such as watercolour, pastels, and collage, paving the way for the diversity and versatility of her future output.

Many of these works are on display in the 'Biocosmic' section, which Chong reveals to be his personal favourite. "It is here that we really discover some big revelations. Each work is like a microcosmos in itself – like a little theatre." The room begins with beautifully intricate pencil drawings and watercolours from the 1950s. These works reveal Kusama's early obsession with organic and biomorphic forms, stemming in part from her childhood years in the mountainous region of Japan around Matsumoto. The adjacent wall displays watercolours and collages from the 1970s and 1980s; albeit intimately scaled and created with modest materials, each work is powerfully assertive and evocative, revealing the psyche of its creator to be at once tormented and muscular. The delightfully macabre box collages are simultaneously hair-raising (literally so with the one that contains a bulging mass of animal fur) and poignant, a nod to Cornell's famous shadow boxes. At the centre of the room stand tree-like sculptures from the mid-1980s, sprouting unruly growths; monstrous, grotesque yet uncannily elegant and life-affirming, they represent Kusama's steady ascent from disillusionment and desolation back onto the international stage.

Right
Unafraid to confront the unsettling: Yayoi Kusama *Untitled (Chair)* 1963, sewn stuffed fabric, wood, and paint Collection of the artist

Below
Yayoi Kusama *Accumulation of Stardust* 2001, acrylic on canvas, three panels, Matsumoto City Museum of Art.



© YAYOI KUSAMA
Image courtesy of Yayoi Kusama Foundation

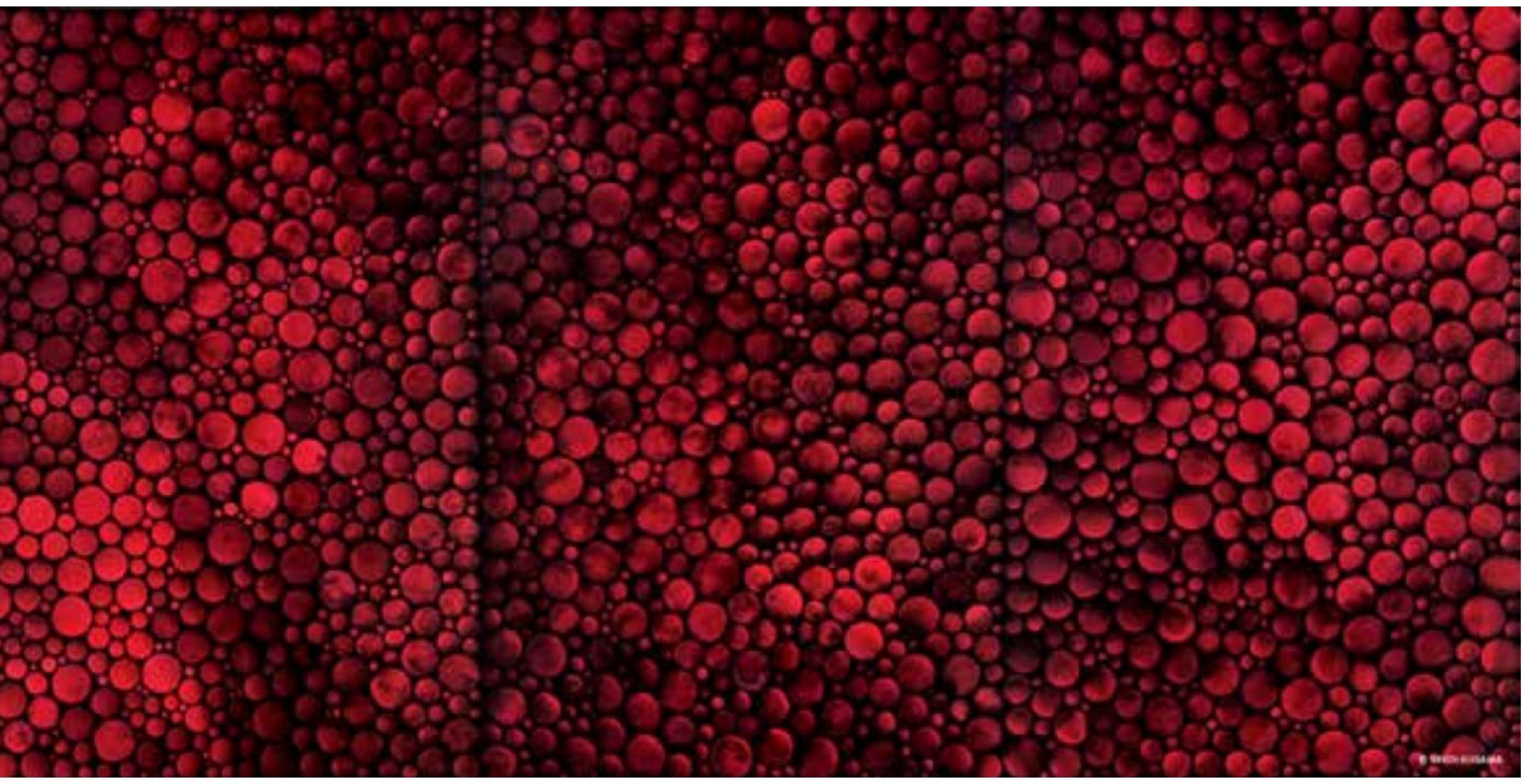


Photo: Lok Cheng M+, Hong Kong

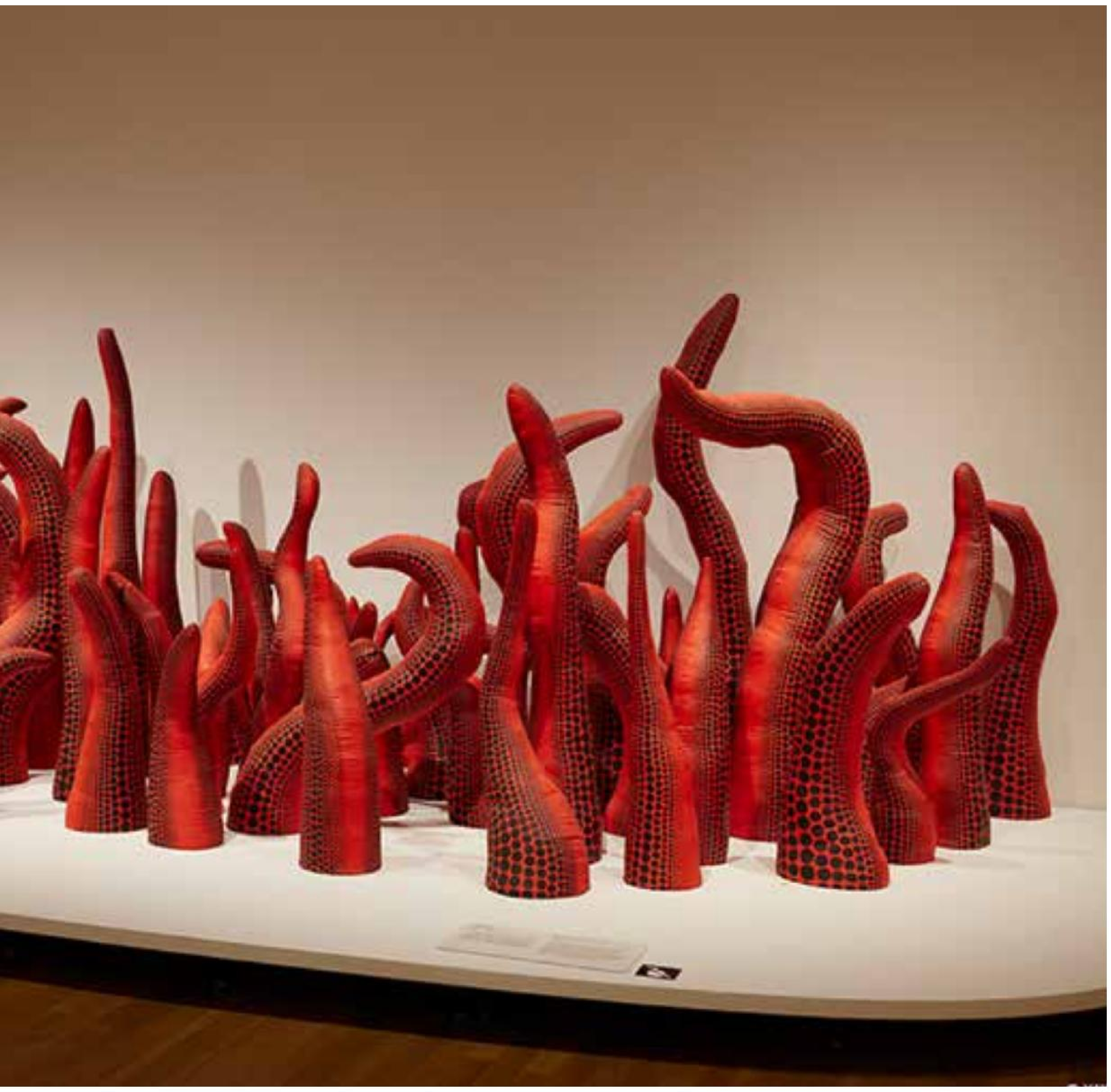
Above
The eternally recurring cycles of life and death articulated in biomorphic disquieting tentacles: the installation view of *The Moment of Regeneration* (2004) at *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now, 2022*

The last two sections of the exhibition, 'Death' and 'Force of Life', give the conclusion of the exhibition a dramatic arc. In the 'Death' room, bone-chilling paintings such as *Accumulation of the Corpses* (1950) and *Accumulation of the Corpses (Prisoner Surrounded by the Curtain of Depersonalization)* (1950) hover against the haunting silhouettes of the shrine-like installation *Death of a Nerve* (1976) and the disembodied silver phallus frame *A Gateway to Hell* (1974). Enclosed in dark green walls, the 'Death' gallery is smothered in an eerie hush; it is with bated breath that we await the result of Kusama's battle with her internal demons. We do not have to wait long, for through the next doorway she emerges triumphant: the final 'Force of Life' room displays a large selection of exuberant canvases from her ongoing series *My Eternal Soul* (2009-). Almost mural-like in their stacked presentation, the group of astonishing recent paintings, started when Kusama was already 80 years old, emanate vitality, strength, and joy in creation and existence.

"A few people asked me – based on the works in 'Force of Life' – whether Kusama is now 'cured'," says Chong. "Relatedly, others have questioned whether the show wraps up too cleanly with a perfect happy ending. Such a reading, I'm afraid, completely misses the point." What *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now* demonstrates, in both form and content, is the eternally recurring cycles of Kusama's life, psyche, and art – her repeated confrontation of mental illness by repeated and obsessive artmaking, and her recurring use of compulsively created forms and motifs as a method of self-consolation and healing. "Kusama is not an artist who goes from one phase to the next phase to the next, in a linear way. There are breakthroughs and then there are returns, and then everything repeats," says Chong. Again and again she faced death and her demons head on, each time renewing her will to create as well as her will to live.

> "A few people asked me… whether Kusama is now 'cured'… whether the show wraps up with a happy ending"

"Another way to understand it, although this might border on mythologising the narrative, is to recognise



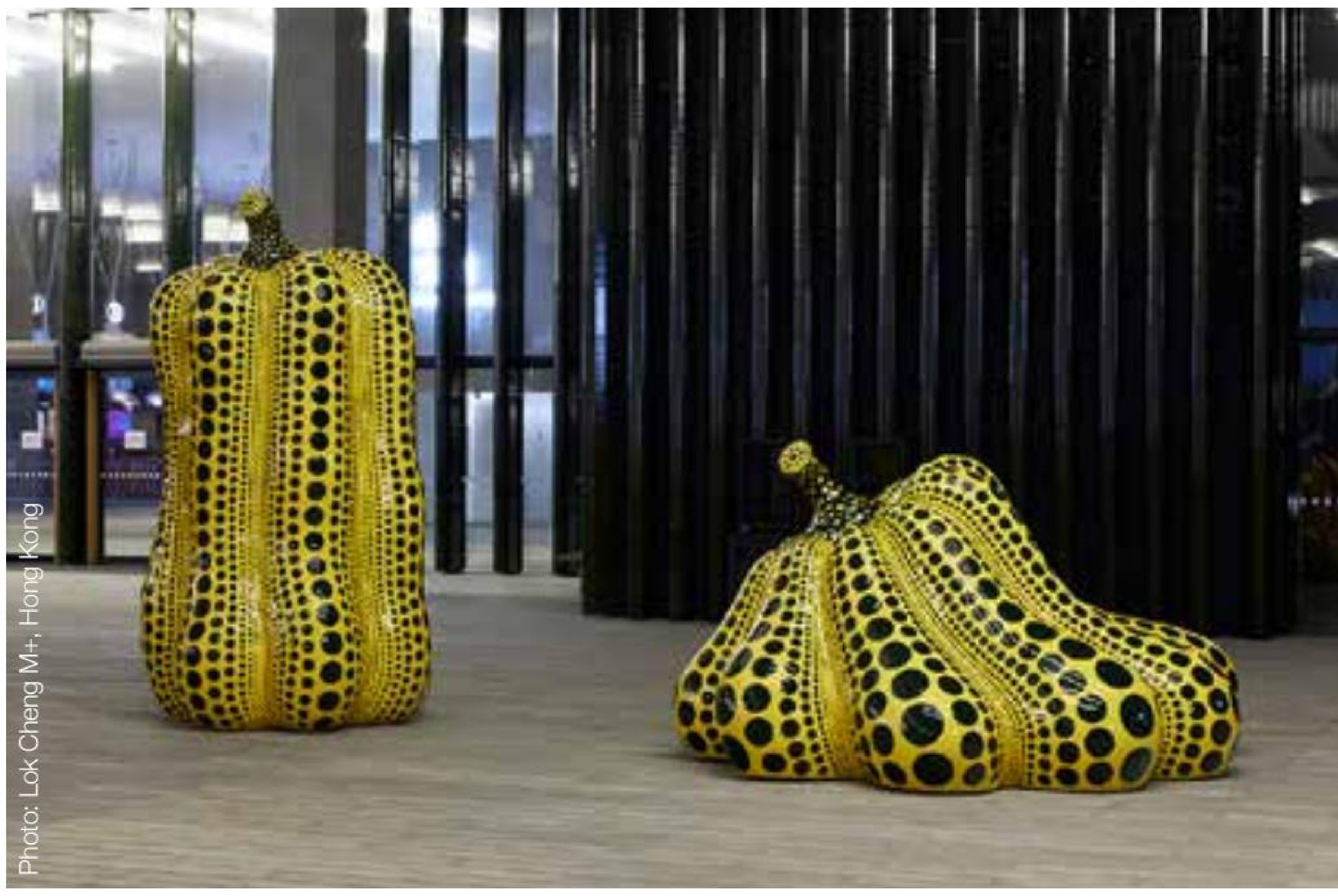


Photo: Lok Cheng M+, Hong Kong

Top right
Quintessentially Kusama: Installation view of Pumpkin (2022) at *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now, 2022*

Right
Grand spectacles and existential despair: the installation view of *Death of Nerves* (2022) at *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now, 2022*

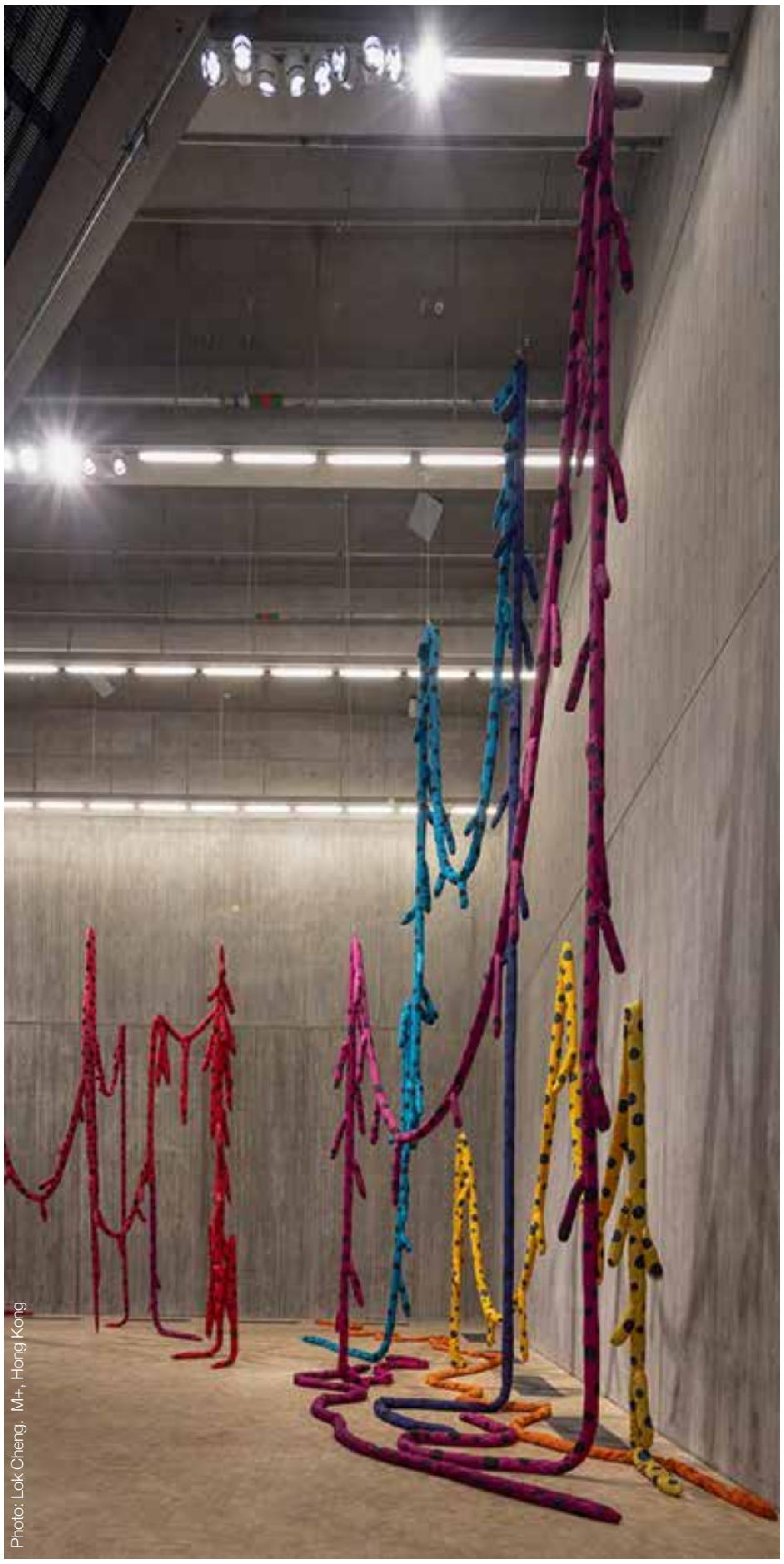


Photo: Lok Cheng. M+, Hong Kong

that the seeds of obsessions were always there, from the very beginning," Chong says. "I'll give you an amazing example. Circling back to the opening chamber of the exhibition, where the group of self-portraits is displayed, the earliest work is from 1950, when Kusama was just 20 or 21 years old. That's the one with the dark ball of flame with a pair of floating lips below. It's an incredible image in itself, which she titled *Self-Portrait*. When you look closely at the halo around the central mass, you will see the repeating pattern of the *Infinity Net* – the motif that would make its entrance into the official narrative eight years later. We only discovered this when the work arrived, because it came from the artist's own collection. So this is one example that illustrates how all the ideas – or the 'seeds of obsession', to use the proper Kusama terminology – were always there from the very beginning."

Michele Chan writes for Frieze, ArtAsiaPacific *and* Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art.

Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now is at M+ (West Kowloon Cultural District, 38 Museum Drive, Kowloon, Hong Kong; mplus.org.hk/en/exhibitions/yayoi-kusama-1945-to-now/) until 14 May.

Threading through time

Among cognoscenti, Peta Smyth's shop was *the* place for antique fabric, says ***Serena Fokschaner***. Now her gorgeous rare textiles and tapestries have come to sale one last time

There are some interior designers who'd rather you didn't know about Peta Smyth. For almost 50 years, Peta – a textile dealer – has been quietly supplying some of the industry's key names, like Alidad, Nicky Haslam or Emma Burns, Managing Director of Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, with the pre-19th-century rarities – Flemish tapestries, gleaming passementerie or fragments of Spitalfields silk – that they use to bring colour and patina to rooms.

But now it is time to move on. Peta has closed the Pimlico shop that she opened in 1983. A 'word of mouth' sale at the end of January drew gimlet-eyed buyers from across the country to rummage through tassels and tie-backs, velvets and brocades, or the rolls of French silk stacked on shelves in the red damask-lined interior. The more valuable pieces in her collection – stately, wall-spanning tapestries, fine English needlework – amassed over time and assiduously researched by her long-standing colleague Joseph Sullivan, will be auctioned at Bonhams on 21 March in Montpelier Street.

> "The 'rag lady'... had a knack for unearthing rubies in the dust"

It was Peta's first 'proper' job, with respected early textile and sculpture specialist Joanna Booth in the 1970s, that sparked her interest in cloth. "She has a wonderful eye. We used to buy tapestries as well as pieces of needlepoint to make into cushions." Like most fledgling dealers at that time, Peta had a kerbside stall at Portobello market. "At first, I sold things from friends and family – along with costumes from the National Theatre and my childhood stamp collection." But the 'rag lady' quickly discovered she had a knack for unearthing rubies in the dust. "House sales were just starting then. I'd also go to Paris to nose through flea markets or attics. I love sifting through boxes of fragments, discovering unusual pieces," says Peta, whose finds have also ended up at museums such as the Victoria & Albert.

Tapestries are a perennial: "Because wherever you hang them – even in very modern settings – they always bring a room to life," she says. In Europe, tapestry-weaving techniques were developed during the late Medieval period – the famous *Apocalypse Tapestry*, at the Château d'Angers, was made for the Duke of Anjou in 1377 – with the patterns and colours becoming increasingly sophisticated and complex. France's most influential workshops – Aubusson or Gobelins, the latter founded in 1663 – are still operating today. Wall hangings from the Low Countries have always been highly prized: the main centres were in Brussels and Oudenaarde, but Flemish weavers often travelled across the border – and to England. After 1528, larger Brussels tapestries had to include a maker's mark, confirming their provenance.

"The merchants who ran the workshops would commission artists to do designs. Buyers would go to workshops and be shown books of patterns that they could choose from," says Joseph, who joined the business in 2001. 'Verdure' tapestries of Arcadian landscapes and lush foliage, popular in the 17th and 18th century, reflect the interest in botany and exotic plants sparked by discoveries in the New World. "Other subjects like

Above
Peta Smyth, the doyenne of historic textiles, in her Pimlico shop (left)

PETA SMYTH
ANTIQUE TEXTILES

Far left & above
Historic swags and tie-backs in Peta Smyth's Pimlico emporium, which she has run for 45 years

Left
Peta's fragments always displayed behind her desk are on offer at Bonhams in March

Right
A mythological Soho tapestry from the last quarter of the 17th century, after designs by Francis Cleyn (1582-1658)
Estimate: £12,000 - 18,000

classical mythology or hunting scenes, have always been popular," says Joseph. He singles out a pair of French 18th-century portières from Beauvais, set up by Louis XIV's finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert. They feature mythological images – then fashionable at Versailles, where a different deity was assigned to each room. Paintings were another source of ideas: a 1750 Aubusson of canoodling couples in vibrant colours was based on engravings of Nicolas Lancret's *Âges de la Vie* set of paintings, now in the National Gallery.

In England, the Mortlake Manufactory, founded in 1619, made tapestries for the Royal Court, but its influence percolated to smaller workshops. A 17th-century scene from the story of Hero and Leander, framed by fecund floral swags and woven in Soho, was based on a design by Mortlake's Francis Cleyn, an artist who trained in Italy before being summoned to England by Charles I. A set of Cleyn's Mortlake panels hangs at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire.

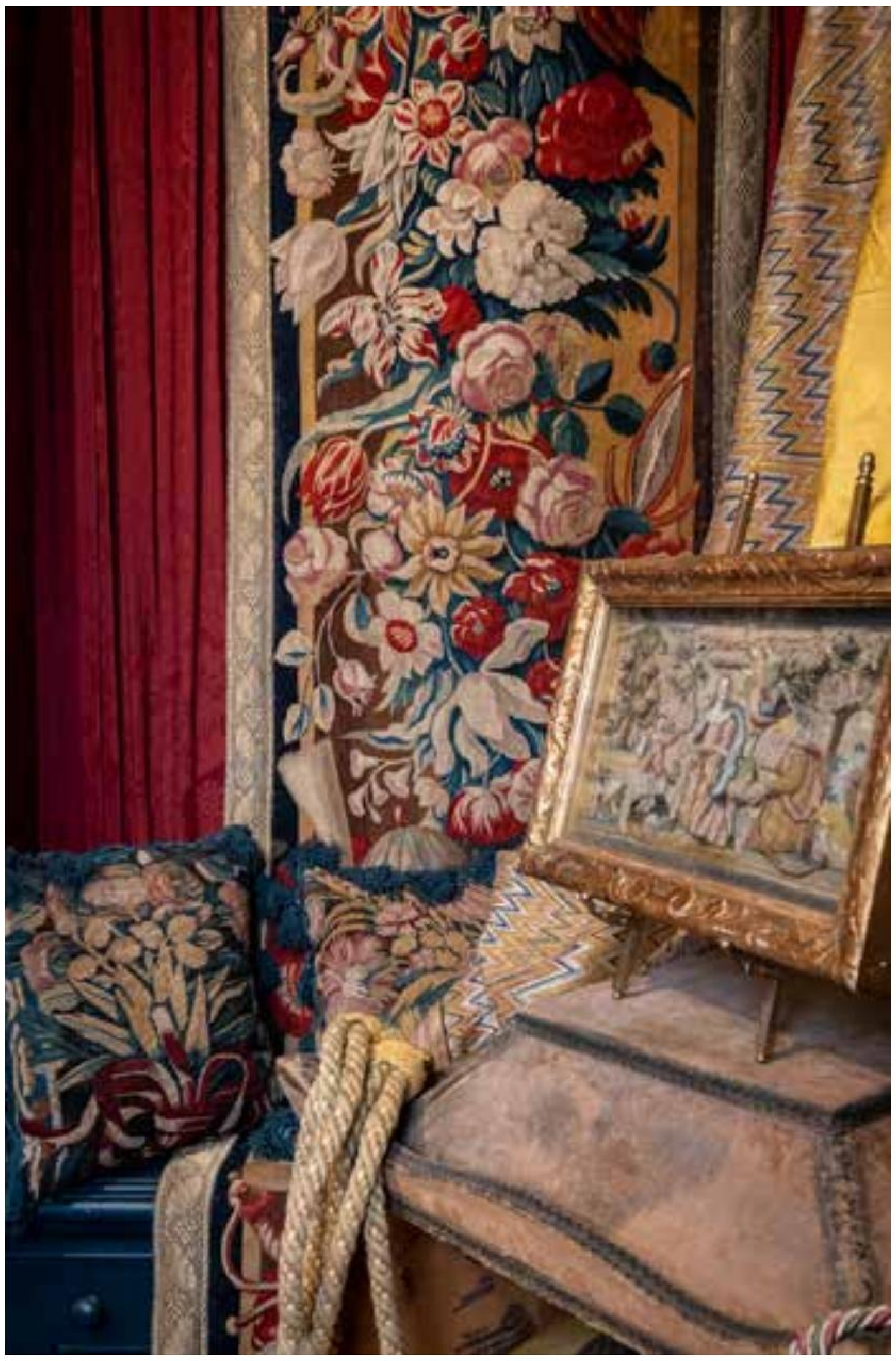
Despite being regarded as status symbols, tapestries could be brutally treated. "Because they were used to insulate rooms, they were sometimes cut to fit around doors, even light switches. When tapestries were inherited – particularly in France – they might be cut across the middle," says Joseph. But even offcuts can find another life. The head of a golden-haired young man, displayed for years on Peta's wall of fragments behind her desk, is a fugitive from a Flemish weave – it would look handsome framed. Elaborate borders can be displayed, like decorative friezes, above sofas or dining tables.

If textiles have been kept out of direct sunlight, the colours can be remarkably vivid – because they were made using natural dyes. "In the latter part of the 19th century, they began experimenting with chemical dyes. The colours may have looked strong initially, but they often faded over time. You can always spot a 19th-century restoration of a tapestry, because the colours don't match," says Joseph.

> "One tapestry of canoodling couples... was based on Nicolas Lancret paintings"

While tapestries were woven by men who belonged to guilds, English needlework was a largely domestic pursuit. "Girls typically started by stitching samplers, before being taught more complex techniques like Elizabethan stumpwork," says Peta. Jacobean woollen crewelwork – the scrolling foliage and flowers stitched on linen – was used for curtains and bed hangings, providing decoration and warmth. "Before the 17th century, homes were rather stark. Textiles brought comfort; they're bound up with the history of interiors," says Peta. Furniture and objects, like the 17th-century casket with secret drawers, were covered in needlework shot through with metallic thread to catch the eye in murky, candlelit interiors.

Other woven ephemera in the sale – pelmets, chair covers, glinting ecclesiastical hangings designed



to hang over pilasters – lend themselves to creative reuse, too. Emma Burns recalls one example: "I found just enough of a piece of antique silver braid at Peta's, which I used to trim a ravishing Fortuny skirt for a dressing table, taking something that was already sublime to beyond perfection."

Interior designer Henriette von Stockhausen finds that antique textiles, "add to the atmosphere of a room in a way that brand-new pieces never do. They make a home feel settled – lived in. I'm finding that people are increasingly interested in using them." For the sympathetic redecoration of a Georgian house in Devon, she put Smythian finds – a "beautifully faded" gold-embroidered velvet coat, a well-preserved 17th-century bedspread – to work as lampshades, curtains or cushions on four-poster beds.

"That's the delight of textiles, if you know where to look and have a bit of imagination, you can always find a way to use them," says Peta.

But not all of her discoveries will be ending up on the saleroom floor. Peta intends to keep some back to turn into cushions and other oddments – or just to look at. Selling textiles has not made her rich or famous. "But it has," she says, "brought me a great deal of enjoyment."

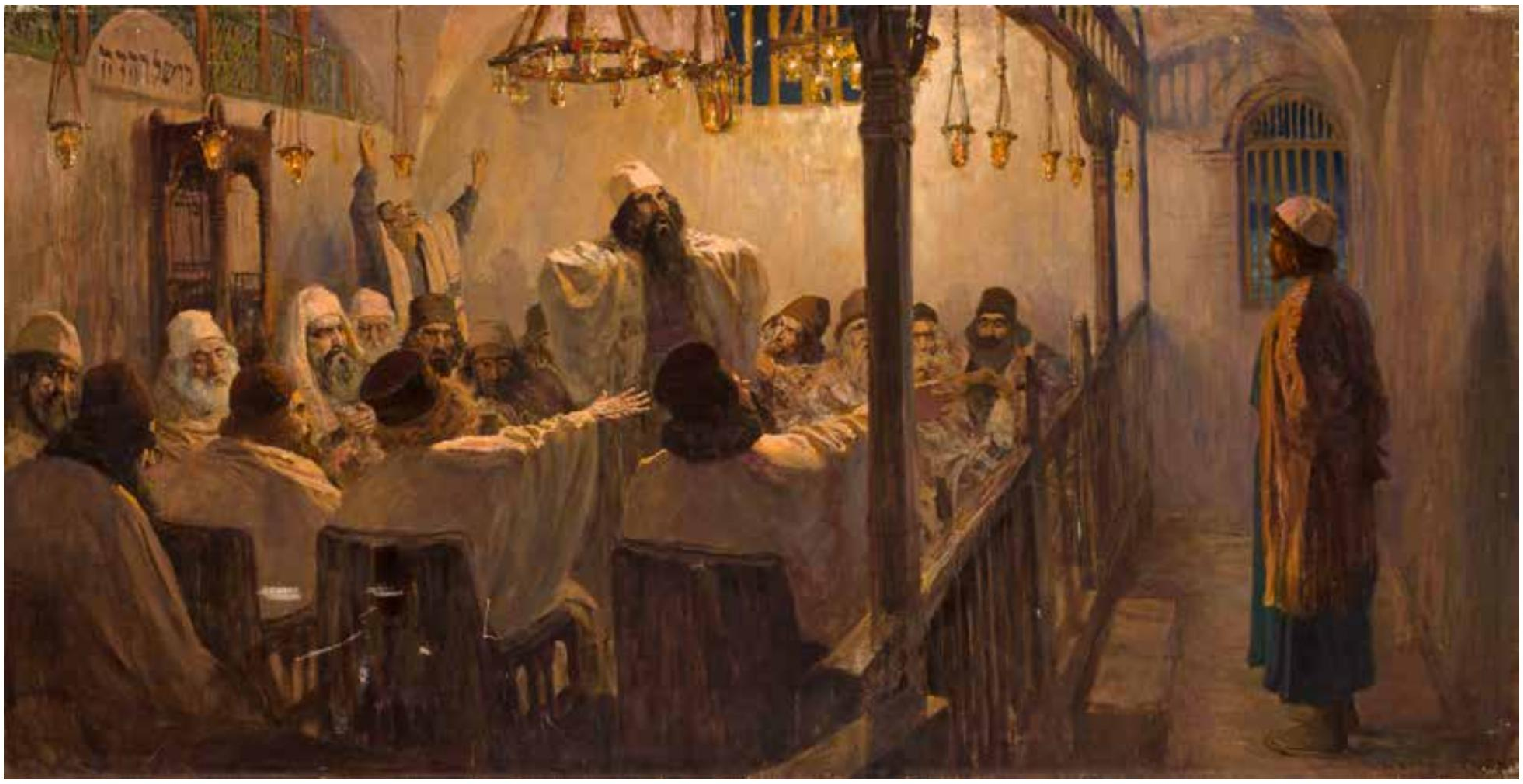
Serena Fokschaner writes for the Financial Times.

Sale: Collections, including The Peta Smyth Collection
Knightsbridge
Tuesday 21 March at 10am
Enquiries: Charlie Thomas +44 (0) 20 7468 8358
charlie.thomas@bonhams.com

Beyond belief

Entranced by their “simplicity and honesty”, Vasilii Polenov painted the Gospel stories with evocative realism. Even the Soviets loved his work, says Claire Wrathall

Main image
Vasilii Dmitrievich Polenov (1844-1927)
There were also women looking from afar off, 1908
signed in Cyrillic (lower right)
oil on canvas
105 x 167cm (41½ x 66in)
Estimate: £500,000 - 700,000
($650,000 - 900,000)



Towards the end of 1908, Vasilii Polenov (1844-1927) wrote to Sofia Tolstoya, wife of the great novelist, to invite her to his Moscow studio. "I will be very glad to show you my pictures *From the Life of Christ* (*Iz zhizni Khrista*), my Gospel cycle as I call them." He had been working on the 70 or so paintings "for about 40 years," he wrote. "They are the work to which I have dedicated almost my entire life."

The following year, 64 of them went on show, first in Moscow, then in Oryol, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Ekaterinoslav (now Dnipro) and Kazan. "The public – a huge one – looked avidly and experienced a sense of the sublime," wrote the eminent Russian Impressionist Leonid Pasternak (his son Boris wrote *Dr Zhivago*). "It's been a long time since I last witnessed such attentiveness and such focused interest."

Polenov's style had caught the public imagination and, even after the 1917 Revolution, the series continued to be popular. Despite their religious themes, their figurative style and celebration of the common man found favour with the People's Commissariat for Education. So much so that, in 1924, a dozen of them were shipped to New York as part of a selling exhibition – the nascent Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was hungry for hard currency. The 914 works were intended, as the Russian art historian Eleonora Paston of the State Tretyakov Gallery has written, to reflect "the entire variety" of contemporary Russian visual art, as long as it was figurative and government-approved. The avant-garde was therefore largely overlooked, even if works by Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov were included in the 100 or so featured artists, also among whom were Léon Bakst, Nikolai Bogdanov-Belsky, Boris Grigoriev, Konstantin Korovin, Ilya Mashkov and Zinaida Serebryakova.

Held at the Grand Central Palace, an exhibition space (demolished in 1964) on Lexington Avenue, the Russian Art Exhibition opened on 8 March. About 8,000 people attended the preview and, as Nesterov wrote, "the reviews were very enthusiastic", even if *The New York Times* judged it "insidiously mysterious [and] remote in feeling from the swift-flowing sparkling emotions of Western nations". Sales were less than buoyant, though among those who bought work were Louis Comfort Tiffany, Sergei Rachmaninov, Fyodor Chaliapin and Charles R Crane, an American industrialist, diplomat and collector of Russian art who purchased nine religious scenes by Polenov for a combined total of $21,500.

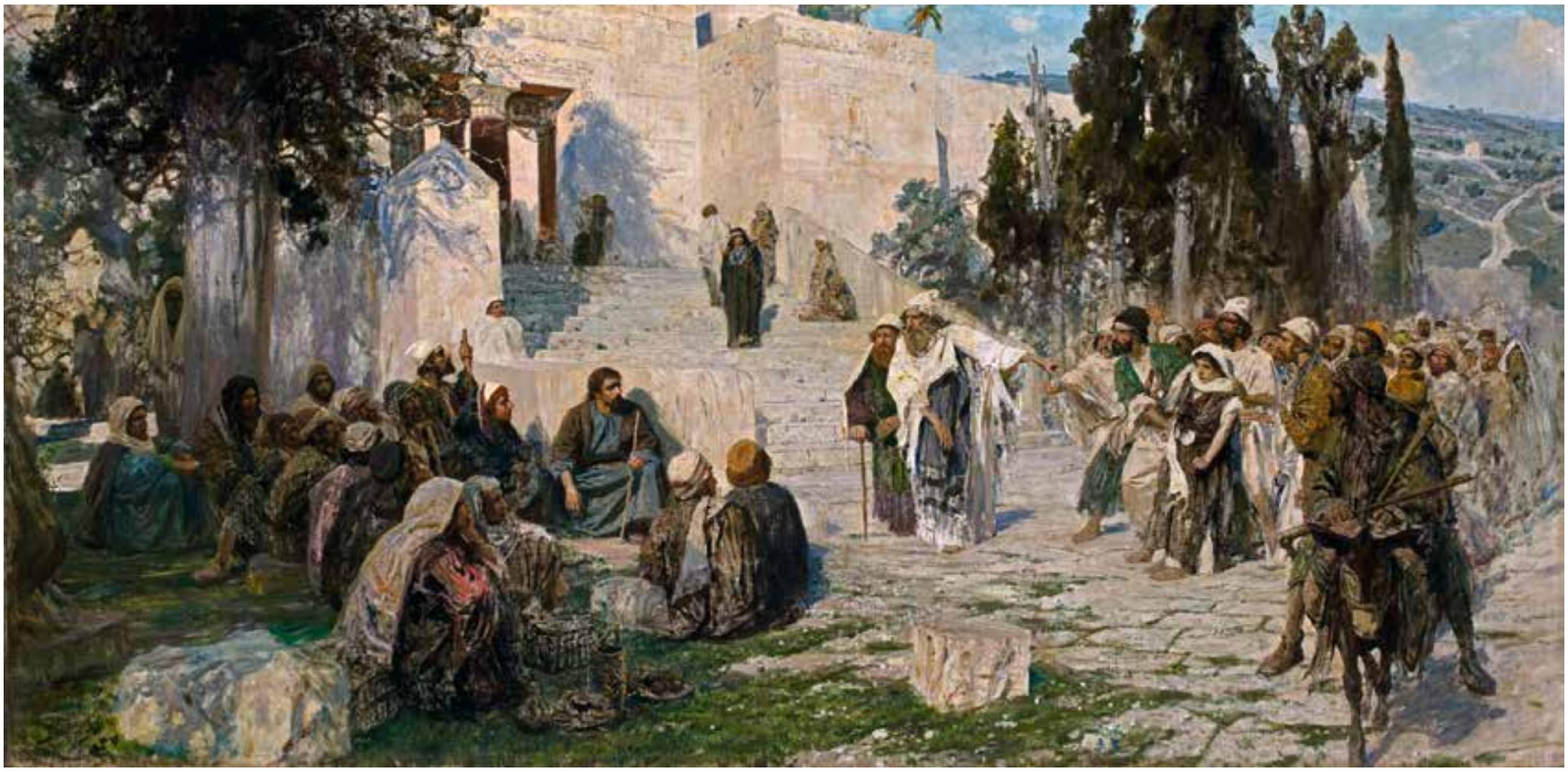
The artist received only a fraction of the revenue he might have expected, however, and his unsold paintings were never returned to him. But, in recompense, the Council of People's Commissars granted him and his family 'lifetime use' of the splendid riverside house he had built, 130km south of Moscow near a village now named Polenovo, using proceeds from the sale of *Christ and the Sinner* to Tsar Alexander III in 1889.

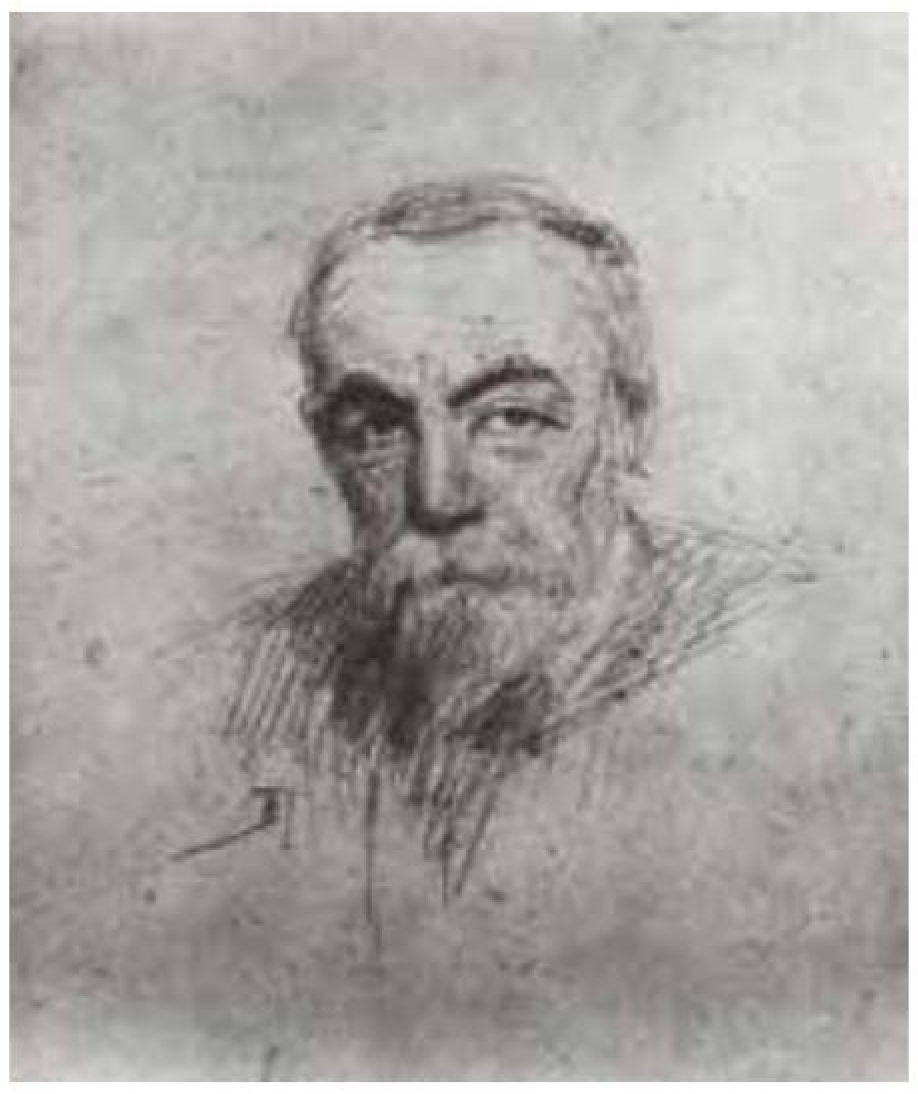
"The pictures were bought by profiteers who sold them at normal Polenov prices"

By 1926, he was a People's Artist of the USSR.

Two of the paintings that Crane bought, *He that is without sin* and *He is guilty of death*, were sold by Bonhams in 2011, for £4.073 million and £2.841 million respectively. And this March, Bonhams will offer a third, *There were also women looking from afar off*, one of the first to be chosen by Crane, who paid $3,500 for it.

Taking its title from the Gospel of St Mark (15:40; the English translation is from the King James Version), it is a boldly unconventional depiction of the Crucifixion that focuses not on the Cross – "There is so much misery and filth in life that if art drenches you in horror and villainy, living becomes too difficult," he wrote in 1888 – but on Jesus's followers. They look east from another hilltop, towards Calvary and the distant Dead Sea, a barely-there horizon of celestial blue (it must have been a sunnier day than the cloud cover suggests) that fades into the mauve of mourning. (Pasternak declared himself "moved" by Polenov's "artistic palette" and "harmony of colours".)





Opposite
Polenov's 1906 painting *He is guilty of death* sold at Bonhams for £2,841,250 in 2011

Above
He that is without sin, painted by Polenov in 1908, was sold at Bonhams for £4,073,250, also in 2011

Left
A self-portrait of Vasilii Polenov from *c*.1901

The verse names the figures as Mary Magdalene, the demonstratively grieving figure on the left, half-hiding behind the wall in her reluctance to witness the unfolding horror; "Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses", the two men in the centre and possibly Jesus's cousins; and Salome, later St Mary Salome (as opposed to the one with the seven veils). Later, the women will be present at the Resurrection. For the moment, they are keeping their distance. To be any closer might put them at risk. Polenov hints at but does not presume to show us their anguish.

Inspired by Ernest Renan's controversial bestseller *La Vie de Jésus*, which examines the life of Christ as a biographer might, Polenov was interested in "seeking out the historical truth" and presenting Jesus and His followers as real people in authentic, not imagined, Middle Eastern landscapes, drawing inspiration from his travels in the Holy Land, Egypt and Syria. Look at the shawls on the heads of the women and the way he paints the blockwork of the buildings, and you might hazard he had stood by the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, a city he reached in 1882, where he painted *An Olive Tree in the Garden of Gethsemane* (now in the Tretyakov) as well as numerous landscapes.

The son of an archaeologist who had spent three years as the secretary at the Russian embassy in Athens, Polenov grew up in St Petersburg, studying at the city's Imperial Academy of Arts, where he won a gold medal for one of his earliest religious paintings, *The Raising of Jairus's Daughter*. The scholarship that came with it allowed him to travel in Europe. In France, he and his contemporary Ilya Repin enjoyed the patronage of the novelist Ivan Turgenev. The 'poetry' of Turgenev's non-fiction, notably *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, inspired Polenov's landscapes, as did the Barbizon School artists. Indeed, Polenov has been credited with introducing the idea of painting *en plein air* to his Russian contemporaries. As the landscape painter Isaac Levitan wrote to him in 1896: "I am convinced that the tradition of painting in Moscow would not have been the same without you."

On his return to Russia, he became a war artist, documenting the horrors of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, after which he joined the Peredvizhniki, or Wanderers, a group of painters who had quit the Academy of Arts, eschewing the formal 'academic' style in order to paint in what they believed was their own essentially Russian way. They sought to take their art to new audiences, organising exhibitions that toured provincial towns, regularly drawing thousands of visitors.

For Polenov believed art should be accessible to all, at one point resolving to sell his work for little more than the materials he needed to make it, though – as one of his students, Sergei Vinogradov, recalled in his memoir – the upshot was simply that "the pictures were bought by profiteers who sold them at normal Polenov prices".

His intention was sincere, however, as was his desire to share his admiration for the New Testament. "I love the Gospel stories beyond words," he wrote. "Their simplicity and honesty, their pure, high-minded ethics and the humanity that permeates their message. But most of all, I love [the] tragic, awful, awe-inspiring end." That is precisely what he paints here.

Claire Wrathall writes for the Financial Times.

Sale: 19th Century and British Impressionism
London
Wednesday 29 March at 2pm
Enquiries: Daria Khristova +44 (0) 20 7468 8338
daria.khristova@bonhams.com

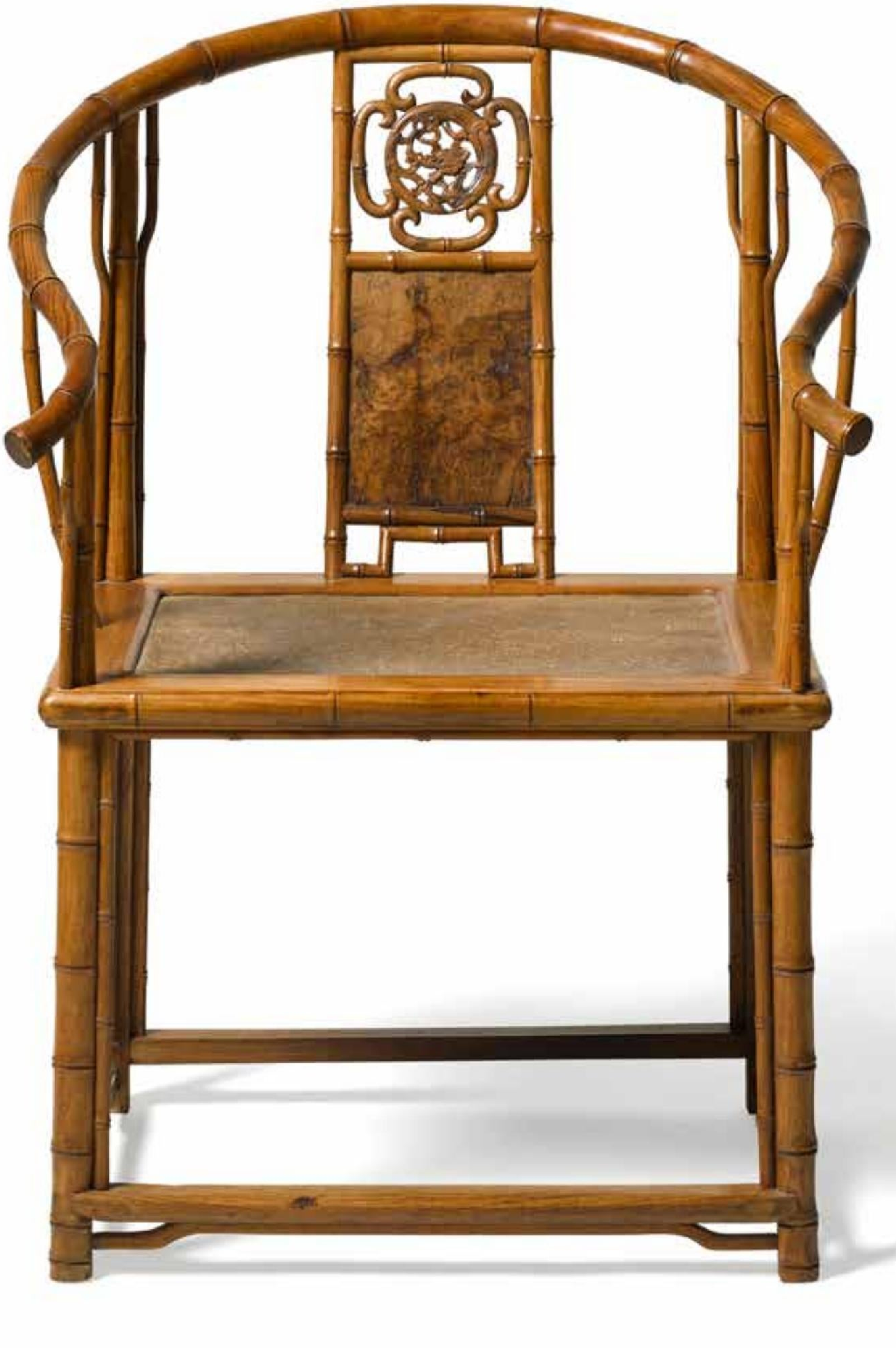
Three chairs for *huanghuali*

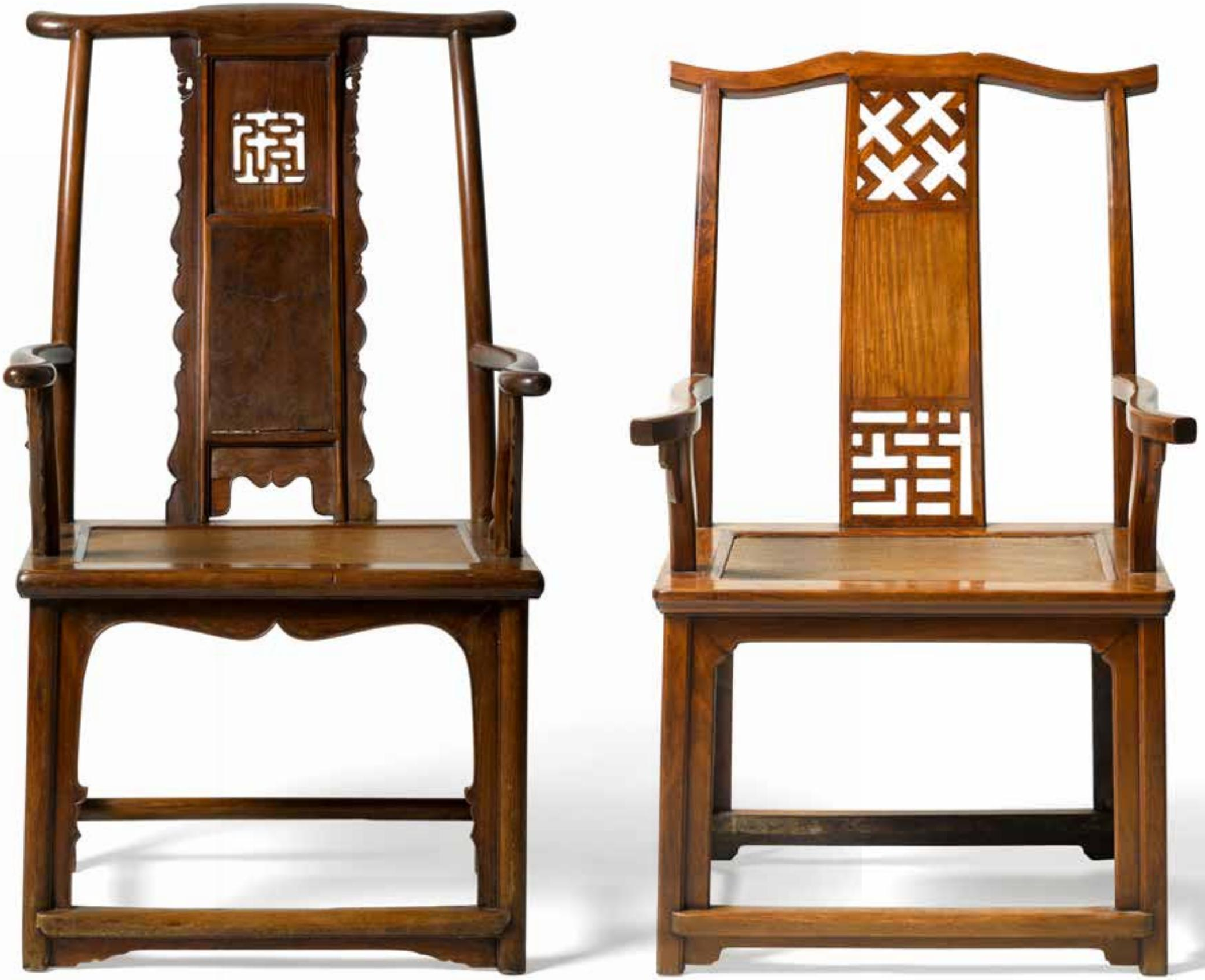
Rare and beautiful, huanghuali wood was used to craft some of the finest furniture in China. Cheney and Mary Cowles had an eye for the very best, says **Emma Crichton-Miller**

Right
A rare and exceptional *huanghuali* and *huamu* bamboo-style horseshoe back armchair, *Quanyi*
17th/18th century

Opposite page, left
A rare and exceptional *huanghuali* and Nanmu 'Fu' character yokeback armchair, *Guanmaoyi*
Ming dynasty, 16th/17th century

Opposite page, right
A very rare *huanghuali* 'Wan Nian Taiping' yokeback armchair, *Guanmaoyi*
Ming dynasty, 16th/17th century

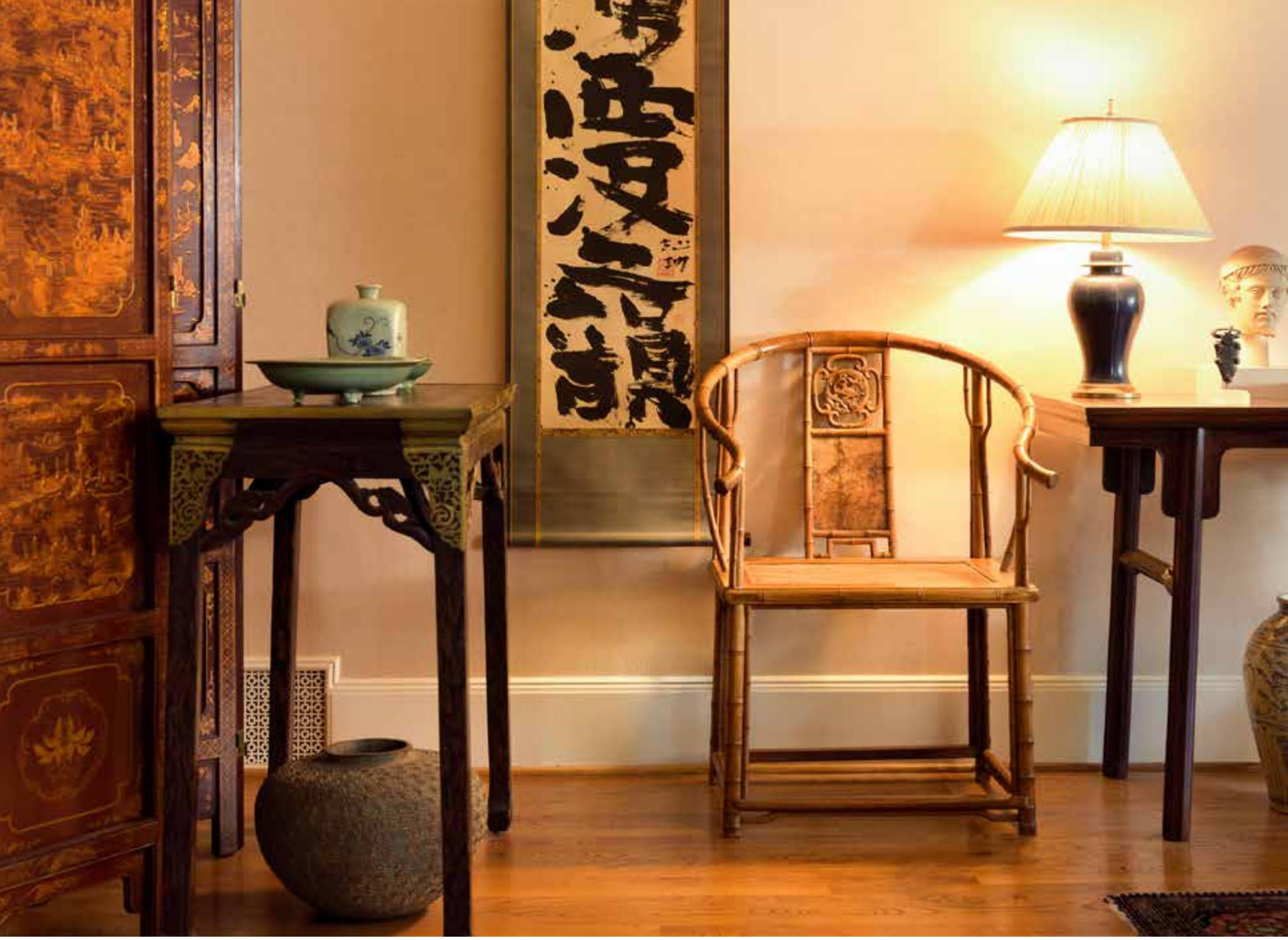




Cheney and Mary Cowles are among the foremost collectors of Asian art in the United States. For more than 40 years, the Seattle-based couple have been putting together one of the most comprehensive collections of Japanese painting and calligraphy in private hands in the West. In 2019, they announced a landmark gift of more than 550 Japanese paintings, calligraphic works and ceramics to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art and the Portland Museum of Art. But, while Japan has been their primary focus, the Cowles have also acquired a considered collection of Chinese classical furniture, including some outstanding pieces of Ming Dynasty furniture made of *huanghuali*.

Huanghuali – literally 'yellow flower pear' – pieces are the jewels in the crown of Chinese furniture. It is a slow-growing wood, unique to the island of Hainan, that develops with age a glowing yellow-brown patina. It was first used as a material for furniture at the end of the 16th century. During the reign of the Emperor Longqing (1567-1572) in the late Ming period (1368-1644), China opened its markets, receiving, among other goods, an influx of tropical hardwood from Hainan and areas surrounding the South China Sea. These dense, hardwearing yet flexible timbers inspired craftsmen to create technically ambitious forms not possible in softer woods.

The woods were used as solid timber – not often as a veneer – using techniques dating back to the 12th century. Every detail of the joinery, down to the size and precision of the dowels, was exposed. The very dark *zitan* – another type of highly valuable and sought-after wood which particularly lent itself to elaborate carving – was, along with *huanghuali and jiqimu,* used for furnishings for the Imperial Court. But the warm *huanghuali*, with its much valued 'mountain peak' and 'ghost face' patterns in the grain, was also commissioned



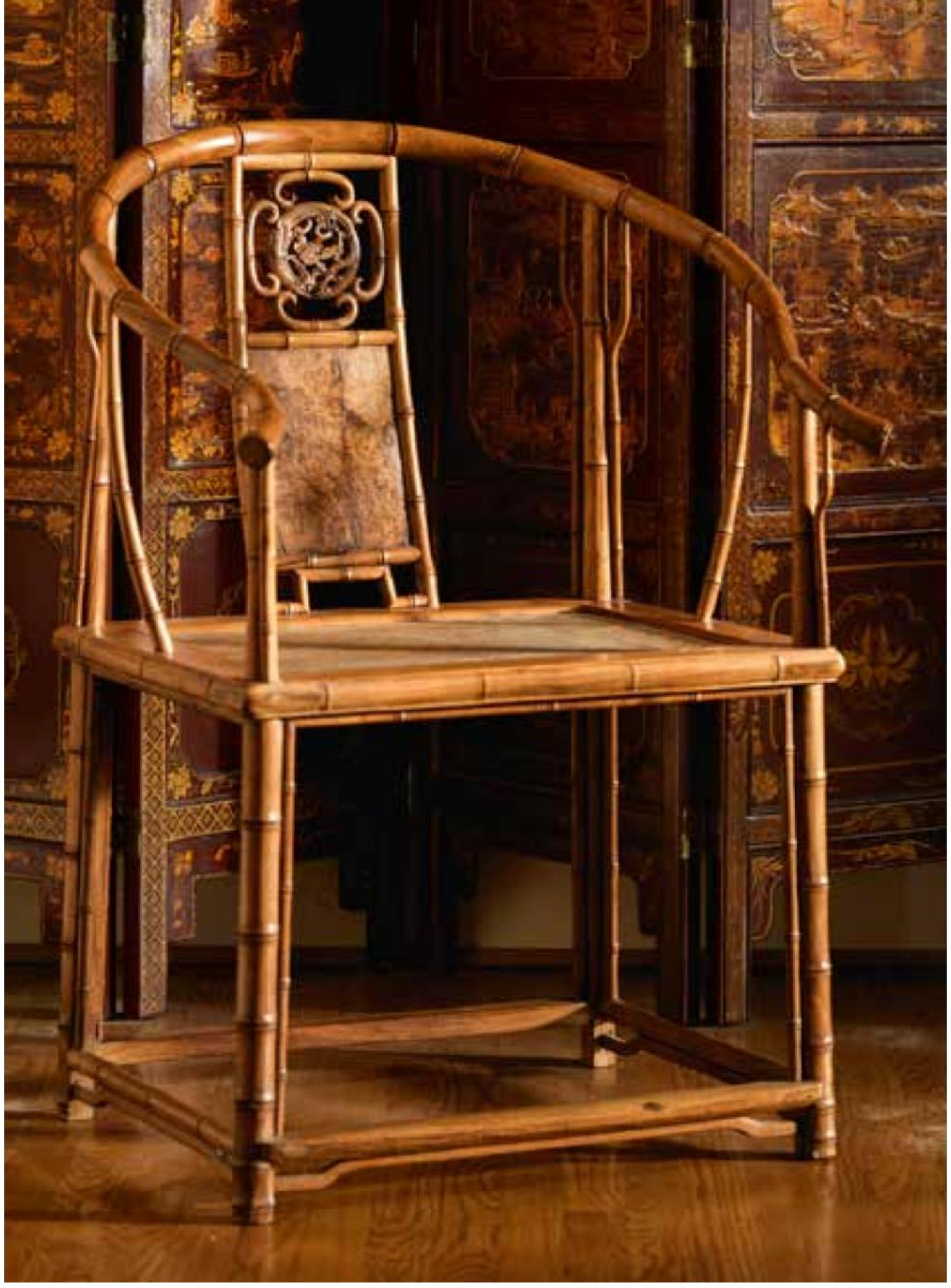
by high ranking officials and wealthy merchants, encouraging craftsmen to develop a distinctive lexicon of forms and types of furniture to suit their restrained tastes. Especially fine timbers would be treated like natural wonders, and set off to advantage as unadorned tabletops or cabinet fronts. This elegant style, with its generous proportions, was then perpetuated through the pattern books of masters and their apprentices into the early Qing period (1636-1912), before changing fashion and the scarcity of this precious wood caused craftsmen to turn to other materials, and to recycle elements of older furniture into new forms. Today, *huanghuali* is also sought after by connoisseurs for its honey-like scent, which is thought to repel insects. However, because the wood is so slow-growing, there is a very limited supply. It is the rarity of this beautiful wood, combined with the technical skill and refined style of the furniture-makers, that draws collectors.

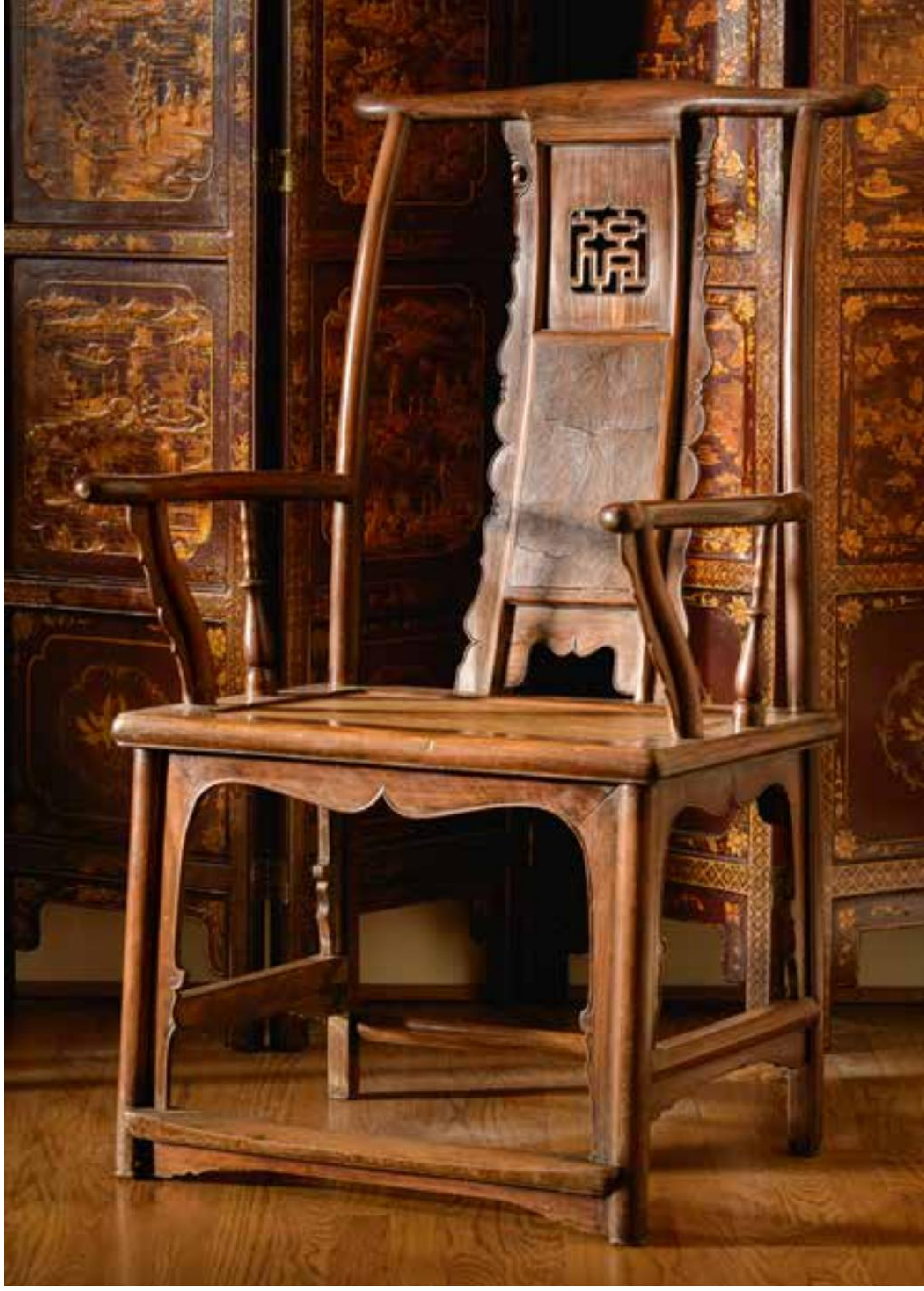
"Cowles is clear that he and his wife 'were drawn to the elegant designs'"

Cheney Cowles was originally inspired to collect while a law student in San Francisco, where his aunt introduced him to the Asian Art Museum. He explained that, besides his focus on Japanese art, "I had a general interest in Chinese art, starting in the late 1960s. Viewing the *huanghuali* furniture in the Metropolitan Museum in the early 1970s perhaps spurred my interest in the material. Also, a book on Chinese furniture by Gustav Ecke was an early influence, followed by the purchase of Robert Ellsworth's book on the subject in 1976." Gustav Ecke's magisterial volume *Chinese Domestic Furniture*, which was first published in 1944, reflects the pioneering interest shown in *huanghuali* by a number of European collectors and scholars in the early part of the 20th century.

Robert Ellsworth, meanwhile, was a noted New York dealer in Asian art, once dubbed 'the king of Ming' by *The New York Times*. He became a leading figure in drawing the attention of significant US collectors and museum curators to ancient jade and Ming and Qing dynasty furniture. Indeed, it was the purchase by the Metropolitan Museum of Art of a suite of Ming and Qing furniture from Ellsworth, early in the 1980s, that led to the creation of the Astor Chinese Garden Court, which was modelled on a Ming-era scholar's courtyard.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the market for Chinese classical furniture really took off in the US, the Cowles began to focus on this field. Leading experts such as





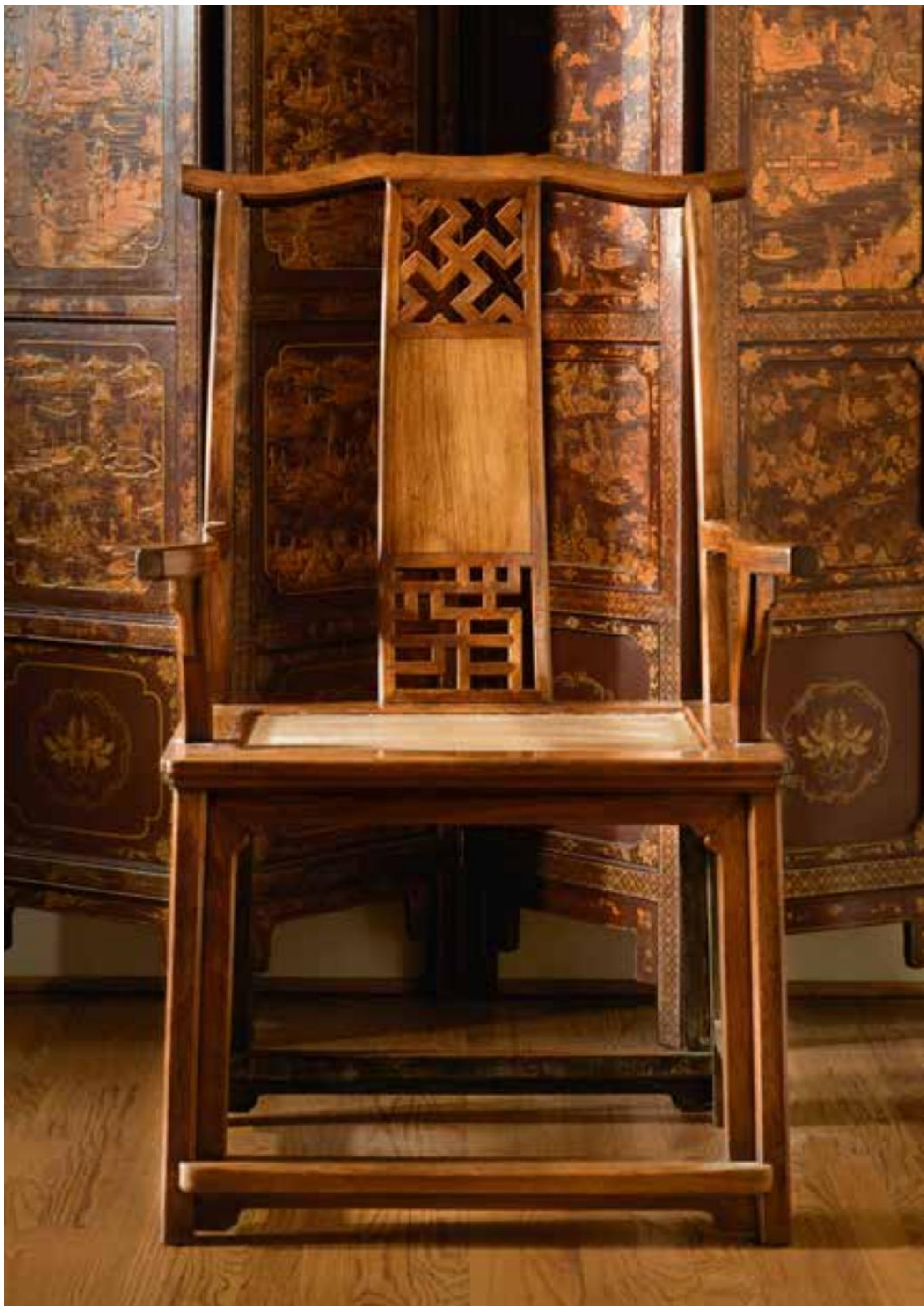
“*Huanghuali* – literally ‘yellow flower pear’ – pieces are the jewels in the crown of Chinese furniture”

Nicholas Grindley, Peter Lai and Grace Wu Bruce enabled them to acquire exceptional pieces, just as the great museum collection at the Minneapolis Institute of Art was formed. Cowles is clear that he and his wife “were drawn to the elegant designs”, but that they “bought only examples that we would use in our home”. This included cabinets, bookcases and tables, which beautifully set off their collections of Japanese art.

The most important pieces offered at Bonhams during Asia Week New York in March, however, are three outstanding chairs: two yoke-backed and one horseshoe-backed. Of exceptional rarity, they are dated to the 16th to 18th century, when craftsmen were at their peak of creative invention, producing unique variations on classic themes, each one a technical masterpiece and a virtuoso display of the beauty of the wood.

Emma Crichton-Miller is a freelance writer and Editor-in-Chief of The Design Edit.

Sale: The Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection of Classical Chinese Furniture
New York
Monday 20 March
Enquiries: Dessa Goddard +1 415 613 3383
dessa.goddard@bonhams.com



Collections: including The Peta Smyth Collection of Antique Textiles & Tapestries and Selected Items From The Collection of Lord & Lady Flight, and The Contents of Chequers' Attics

London
Tuesday 21 March
10am

Thomas Gainsborough, R.A. (Sudbury 1727-1788 London)
Portrait of William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne and 1st Marquess of Lansdowne
oil on canvas
75.8 x 63.1cm (29 x 24in)
Estimate: £15,000 - 20,000
($18,000 - 25,000)

Enquiries: Charlie Thomas
+44 (0) 20 7468 8358
charlie.thomas@bonhams.com

Back on the block

Rioja is a trusted acquaintance, but is it time to get a bit closer? **Margaret Rand** is your match-maker

How do you change an old and close friend into a lover? Should you even try?

Don't feel you have to answer. It's an analogy with Rioja that is relevant here: everybody's favourite wine back in the day, bought because it was reliably supple and strawberry-vanilla-ish. The Riojans tried to instruct us in the differences between Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and what is now called Rioja Oriental – which sounds more glam than its previous name, Rioja Baja. Did we listen? Did we care? Not much. Rioja was a trusted friend, an ally in any situation, and that was all we needed.

But now just imagine it saying, "Actually, I've always thought I could be a bit more than a friend. I thought I could be a bit… special." The thing is, it might then go on, I've got all these single vineyards, and some really old wines, too. "I don't think you've ever really noticed them, and I just thought…"

> "Lo and behold: here's our old friend Rioja, with a smart haircut and fancy clothes"

It's as difficult to reimagine a wine as it is to reimagine a relationship. Back in the 1980s, everybody loved Rioja for being such good value and reliably delicious, so only a few aficionados looked further. Yet there were always great and rare wines made in Rioja. They weren't helped by the fact that, while they were labelled Gran Reserva, so were a lot of quite everyday Riojas: it was a designation of age and not of extra quality. Producers like La Rioja Alta and Marqués de Murrieta always made splendid wines, wines of complexity and fascination; but you had to know about them to know about them. They were collected by Rioja insiders, who sought out wines like Marqués de Murrieta Ygay and held on to them. And they weren't too fussed about anyone else's opinion of Rioja.

Those collectors still have those great and rare wines. Even if fashion has moved away from Rioja, those wines can still be found – many (such as La Rioja Alta Gran Reserva 904, and Remelluri Reserva and Gran Reserva) are offered at Bonhams Fine and Rare Wines sale in London in April. Even better, the shifting of the spotlight gave Rioja a bit of breathing space in which to evolve.

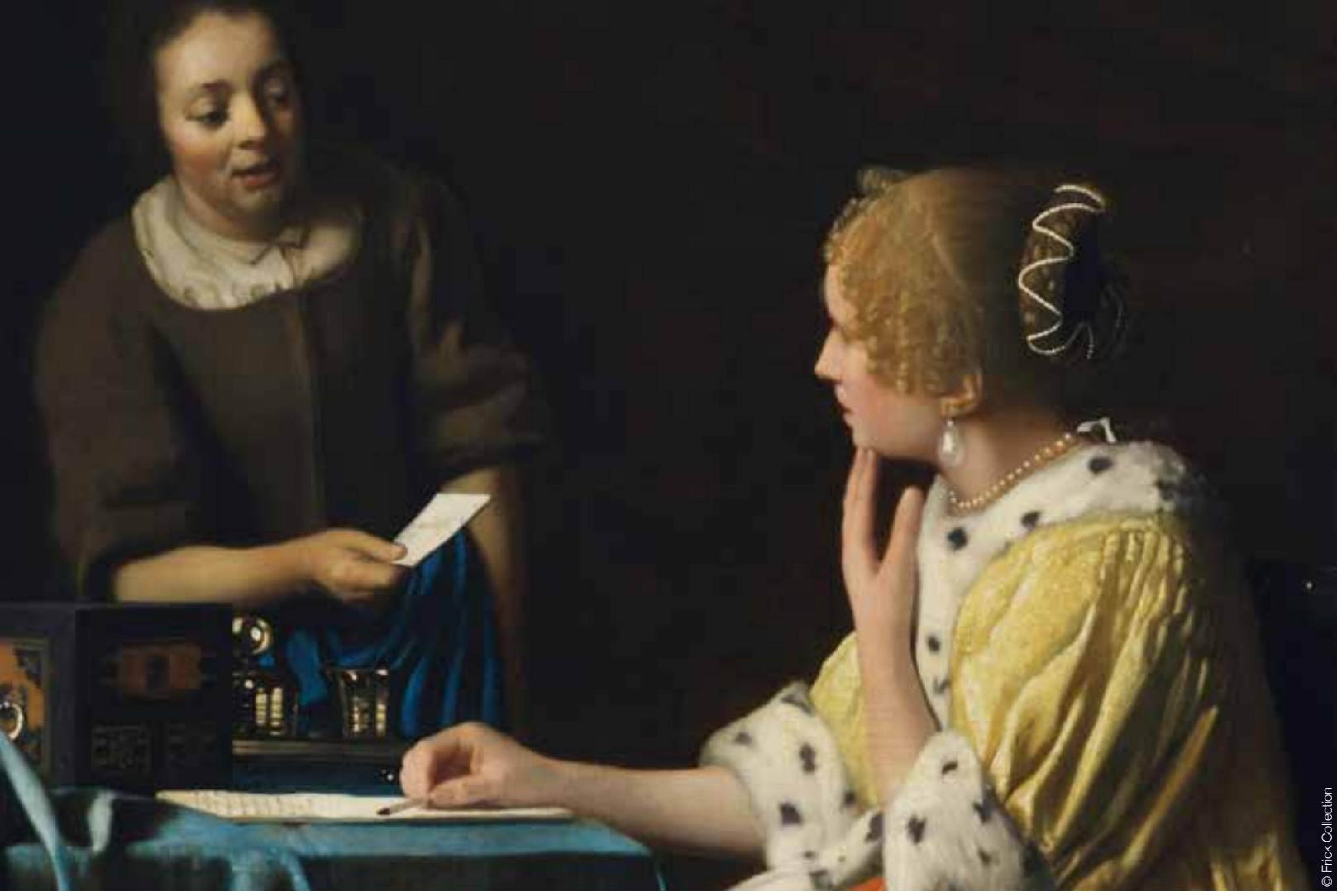
The traditional Spanish market liked its red Riojas old and pale, like Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva 1925, which is faded into fragile elegance – albeit the fragile elegance of an 80-year-old who's good for another couple of decades. It liked its white Riojas darkened with age and with a note of beeswax. Foreign markets moved on to upfront fruit, youth and vigour, and, inevitably, new oak – often to extremes. Some Riojan producers launched new wines in this new idiom. Marques de Murrieta, for example, launched Dalmau, with Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend, and new French oak for ageing. Others (sometimes the same ones) slowly adapted their traditional wines. Red Castillo Ygay 1925 was released at 48 years old. But the latest release, fresh, black-fruited and spicy, is 2011. There is more freshness, less oak and better oak, more precision, more precise origins for the grapes – because while Rioja built its reputation on blends, it has identified many vineyards with personalities too individual not to be shown off – and more precise winemaking and ageing.

The ancient barrels have gone, replaced by better, less obvious oak – and there is some concrete in Rioja now, and some acacia too. You will find great wines being released younger than they used to be, and with poise and self-assurance. Rioja, in short, has reinvented itself – but it never really wanted to say as much to its traditional market, which liked Rioja just the way it was. But generations change. Now foreign markets have moved away from the excesses of new oak and reds you could stand a spoon in, and want elegance and finesse. Lo and behold: here's our old friend Rioja, waiting for us, with a smart haircut and fancy clothes.

And if the collector money still wants to chase Bordeaux and Burgundy… well, so much the better for us.

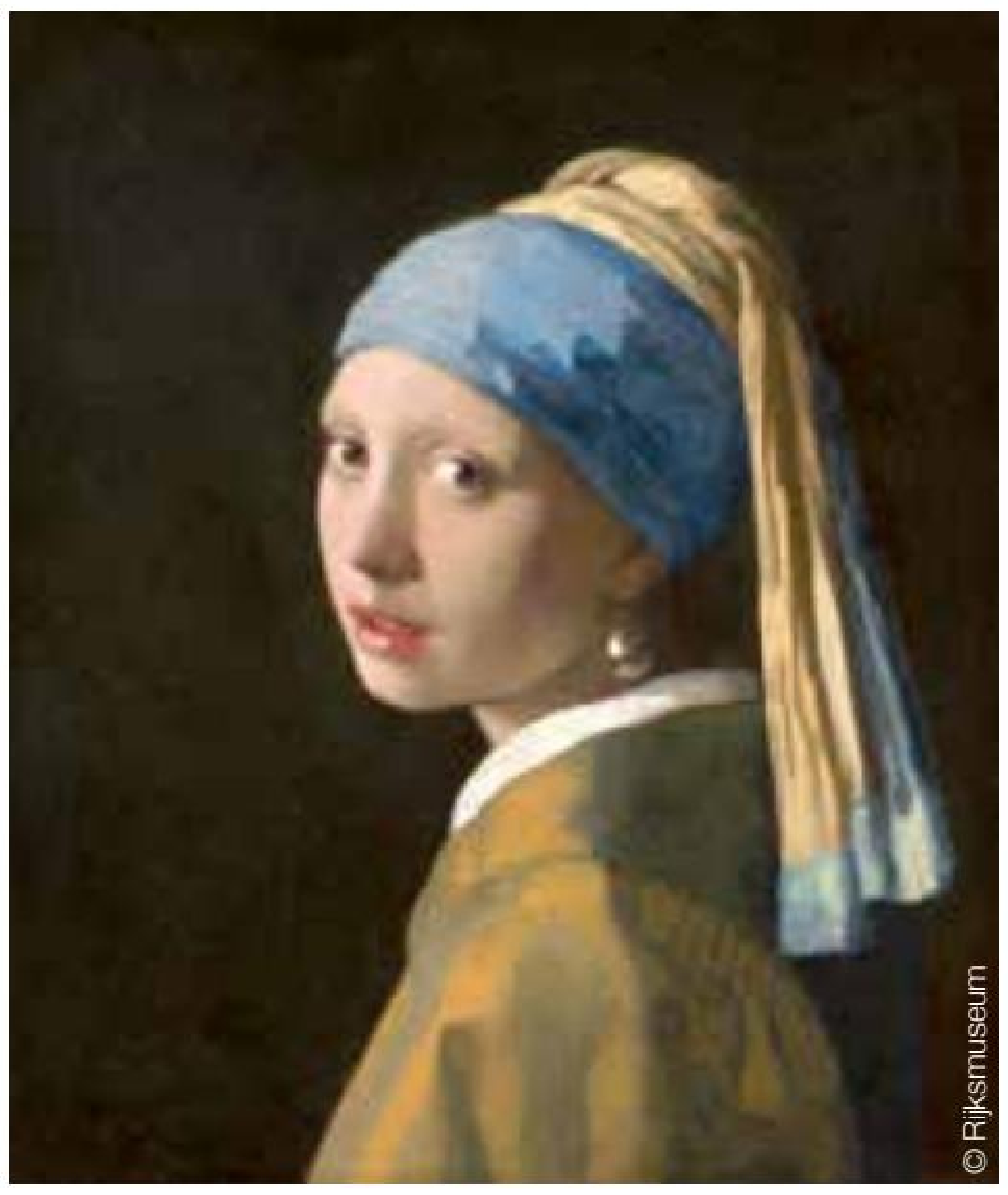
Margaret Rand is editor of the 2023 edition of Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book.

Sale: Fine and Rare Wines
London
Thursday 27 April
Enquiries: Richard Harvey M.W.
richard.harvey@bonhams.com

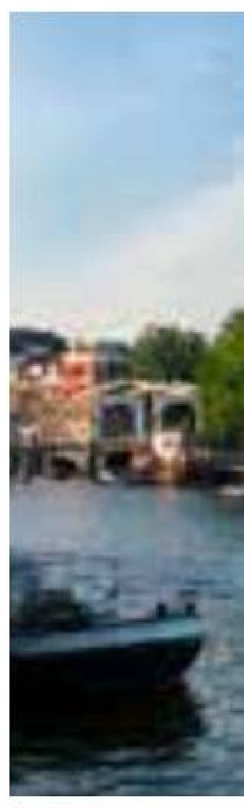


© Frick Collection

Left Mistress and Maid *by Vermeer from the Frick Collection, New York*
Below *Vermeer's* Girl with a Pearl Earring, *which has travelled from Mauritshuis in the Hague*
Right *The Entrance Hall of the Rembrandt House Museum*
Far right *Rembrandt's* Titus at his Desk
Below right *The Hermitage museum in Amsterdam*
Below far right *Moco Museum*



© Rijksmuseum



Letter from Amsterdam

Vermeer at the Rijksmuseum is simply unmissable, says Lucinda Bredin

Very occasionally exhibitions such as Vermeer at the Rijksmuseum come along. Those of a cynical cast will remember the previous 'never-to-be-repeated' Vermeer exhibitions at the Mauritshuis in the Hague and the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. So what's the deal with this one?

Vermeer is thought to have painted fewer than 50 paintings, only 37 of which survive. The Rijksmuseum has gathered 28 of these fragile canvases – more than any of the previous shows. The only notable omissions are *The Art of Painting* (the Kunsthistoriches in Vienna said "yes", then it didn't show up) and the Royal Collection's *The Music Lesson*. But it is the display of the works in a series of rooms, chambers even, that makes a difference. Some rooms have only one work on the wall – whereas the experience at the Mauritshuis was like shuffling through passport control. And there is no fleshing out the show with comparative works, or distracting flashy films.

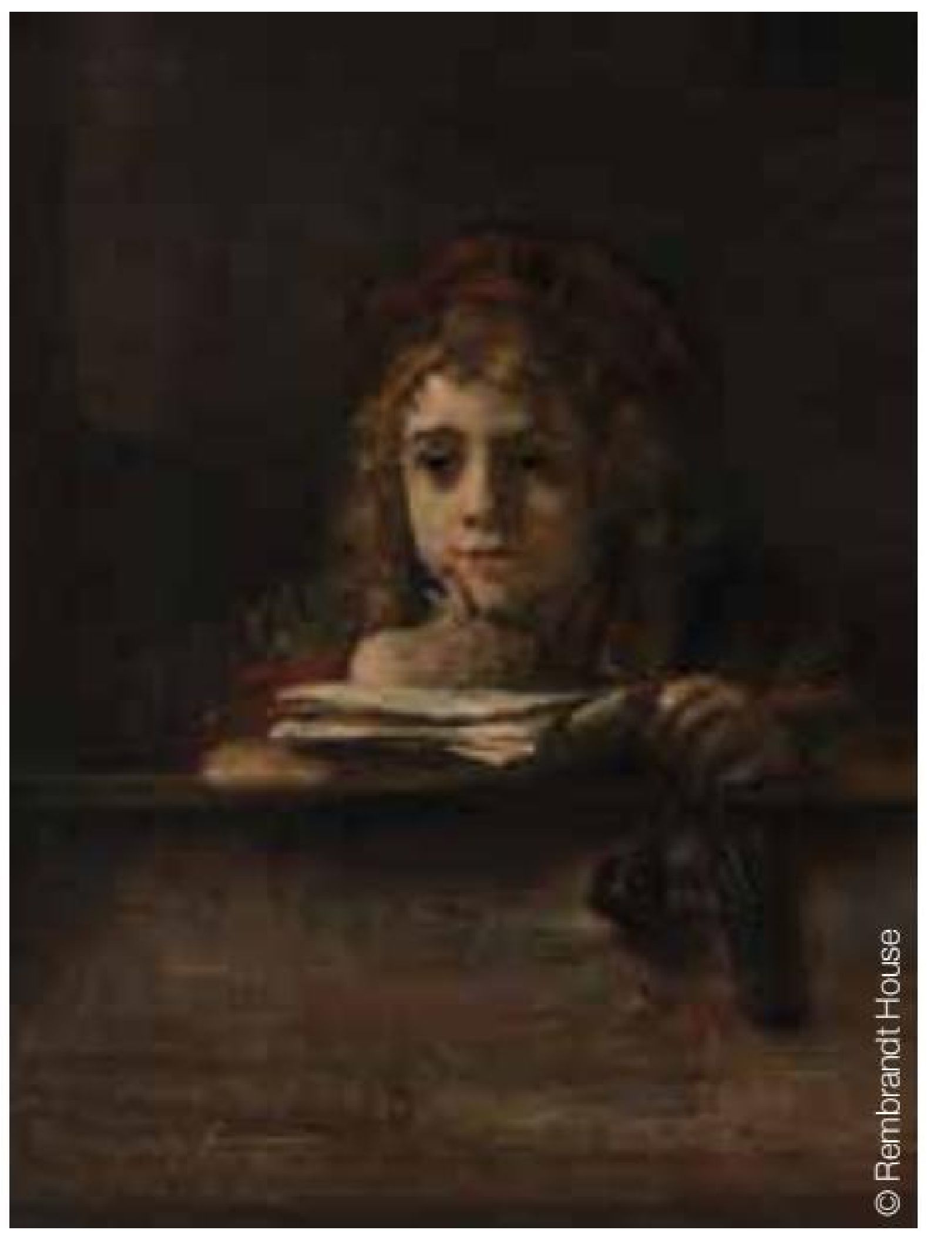
This is entirely appropriate for paintings in which quiet and silence reign, in which time stands still. Which is not to say that nothing happens in these pictures. Of course, the temptation is to fillet the works for a narrative. What is in the letter that the girl is reading? Her flushed, downcast look, together with Cupid on the wall looking at us full in the face, suggest it's a love affair gone awry. The same could be said for the *Mistress and Maid*, lent by the Frick Collection in New York City. What is the maid saying and why is her ermine-cuffed mistress so perplexed?

To dwell too long on the subtext could mean one misses the details. The shift between crystalline focus and deftly blurry strokes that draws the viewer into the world of a 17th-century household is breathtakingly masterful. And, for all the talk about Vermeer using a camera obscura, remember that the famous pearl earring is composed of barely two strokes of a brush. So much for hyperrealism.

It has always been thought that Vermeer's main patron was Pieter van Ruijven, a wealthy Delft merchant who bought half the artist's works. New research has now revealed it was van Ruijven's wife, Maria de Knuijt, who began buying Vermeers in 1657, the year the artist switched from painting religious scenes to focus on domestic interiors. In 17th-century Netherlands, the lady of the house took the lead on furnishings and buying pictures. Could de Knuijt have been behind Vermeer's shift in subject matter?

Not surprisingly, other museums are bringing their 'A' game this season, with a spread of complementary exhibitions of other Golden Age masters. Step forward the Rembrandt House Museum. The Rembrandthuis was once rather dusty and atmospheric, with the entrance through the old front door. Those days are long gone. The winding stairs have been joined by an extension with a gift shop, and, on 18 March, the museum reopens after yet another renovation, which added space for 30 per cent more works by the master. One of the new galleries is showing *The Art of Drawing* (18 March to 11 June), which brings 74 drawings by Rembrandt, Ferdinand Bol, Nicolaes Maes and other contemporaries from the Peck Collection in North Carolina – the first time they have been on display in Europe. Another room in the museum is dedicated to *Titus at his Desk*, Rembrandt's heart-tugging portrait of his young

© Kirsten van Santen


© Rembrandt House

© Janiek Dam

© Moco Museum

son. The work has made the trip from the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam to the house where Titus was born and where it was painted nearly 400 years earlier. The Hermitage Amsterdam is joining in with *Rembrandt & His Contemporaries*. Showing until 27 August, this draws on the private Leiden Collection from New York to set the master in the company of his fellow artists, including Pieter Lastman, Jan Lievens, Jan Steen and Frans van Mieris.

Everybody thinks they know about van Gogh's life. But the current exhibition at the Van Gogh Museum, *Choosing Vincent: Portrait of a Family History* (until 10 April), tells the less well-known story of what happened after the artist committed suicide. When Theo, van Gogh's beloved brother, died, all the artist's works were bequeathed to Jo van Gogh-Bonger, Theo's wife, and their son, also called Vincent. It was Vincent junior who kept the collection together and created the Van Gogh Museum which opened in 1973. The show has many of the artist's major works, punctuated with photographs and drawings of his family who preserved the paintings.

For a break from the Golden Age, do go to Moco Museum, housed in the Villa Alsberg, to see a wide-ranging collection of modern, contemporary and street art. The permanent displays contain familiar names such as Tracey Emin, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol and Keith Haring, as well as new pioneers on the scene. Among Moco's current exhibitions are *NFT (The New fuTure)* and *Digital Immersive Art*, running until August, and the permanent *Banksy: Laugh Now*, which features a tantalisingly unauthorised selection of the artist's original works including *Laugh Now*, *Girl with Balloon* and *Flower Thrower*. Amsterdam is the place to be this season.

Lucinda Bredin is Editor of Bonhams Magazine*.*

© Waldorf Astoria

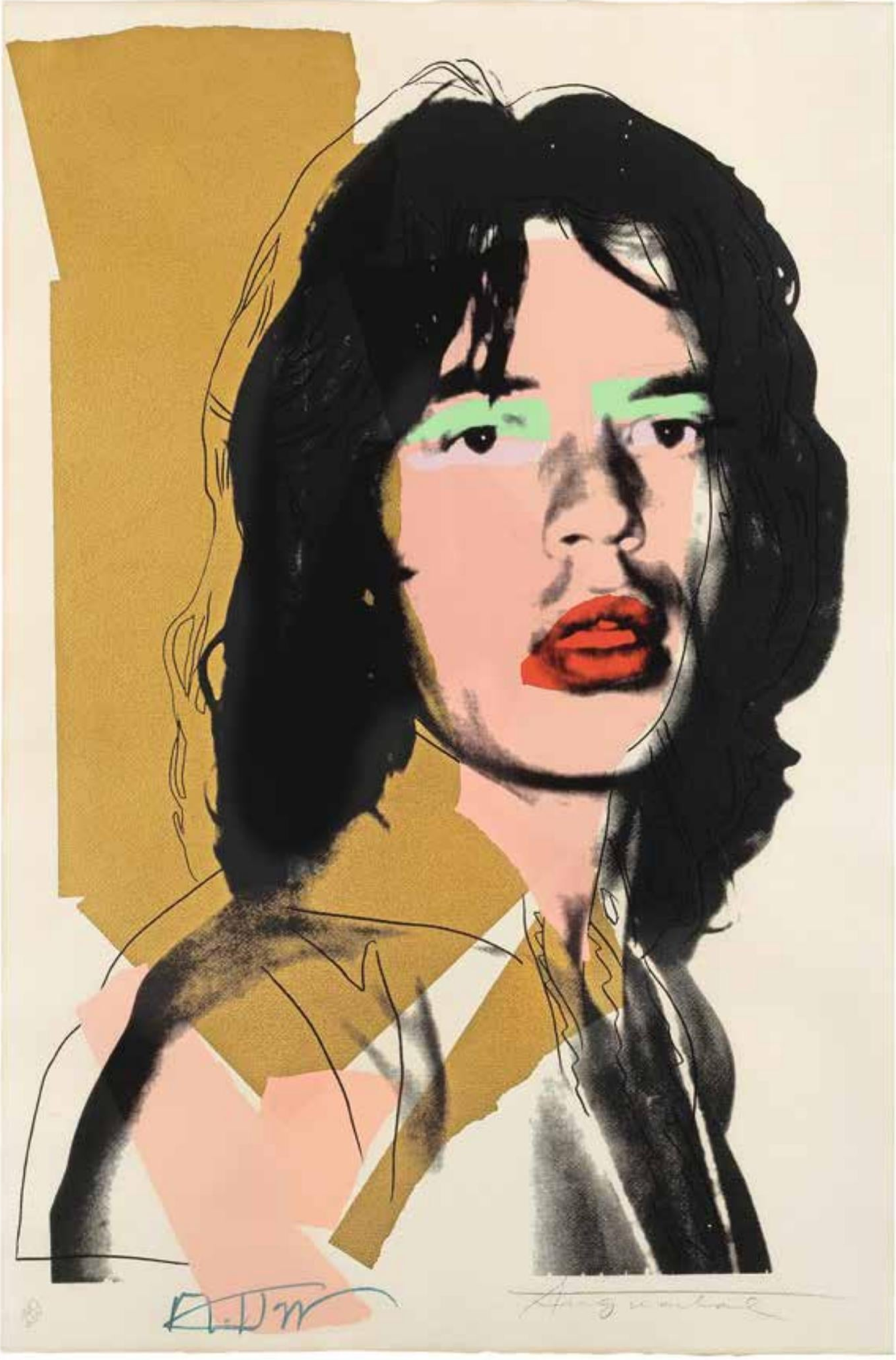
When in Amsterdam…

Where to stay:
Amsterdam is renowned for the number of superb hotels occupying centuries-old buildings on the canals that intersect the city. The Ambassade (rooms from £200) is the favoured hotel of authors, many leaving signed copies of their works in the library. It is fashioned out of 11 canal houses, with eight of them on the Herengracht, the grandest canal in the city. There is a first-floor brasserie and a bar, plus numerous nooks and crannies often furnished with antiques. Seven One Seven (rooms from £500), set on Prinsengracht in the heart of the canal district, is close to all the major museums. It still feels like a grand mansion, with only nine rooms and suites, all named after famous artists, composers and writers. The ambience is more akin to a private house than a hotel, with only breakfast served, although drinks and high tea can be ordered and taken in the library or drawing room, both of which are superbly decorated. The Waldorf Astoria (*pictured above*; rooms from £700) comprises six magnificent canalside mansions converted with grace, a sensitive attitude to heritage (many 17th- and 18th-century features remain) and a careful eye to modern luxury and style. This is the grandest hotel in Amsterdam, with decor that convincingly blends classic and contemporary.

Where to eat:
The food scene in Amsterdam has never received the publicity it deserves, with a number of outstanding places specialising in local produce or paying homage to French cuisine. The leading haute cuisine establishment is Spectrum, which overlooks the courtyard garden of the Waldorf Astoria. Chef Sidney Schutte, formerly of De Librije, Holland's most renowned restaurant, focuses on local produce from the countryside and ocean, and has a broad vegetarian menu. Maris Piper (*pictured below*), one of a group of excellent restaurants, is a laid-back casual brasserie with a simple but serious wine list – more than 200 bottles. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, there is an exclusive chef's table. De Juwelier, a retro-style bistro, serves interesting seafood such as turbot with wild mushrooms and duck liver, or skate with beurre noisette and kale. Meat dishes are also on offer, such as beef tartare with veal brains or oxtail filled with poached marrow. They also run a fish restaurant called Bistro de la Mer. L.B.

© Jan-Kees Steenman

© Chantal Arnts

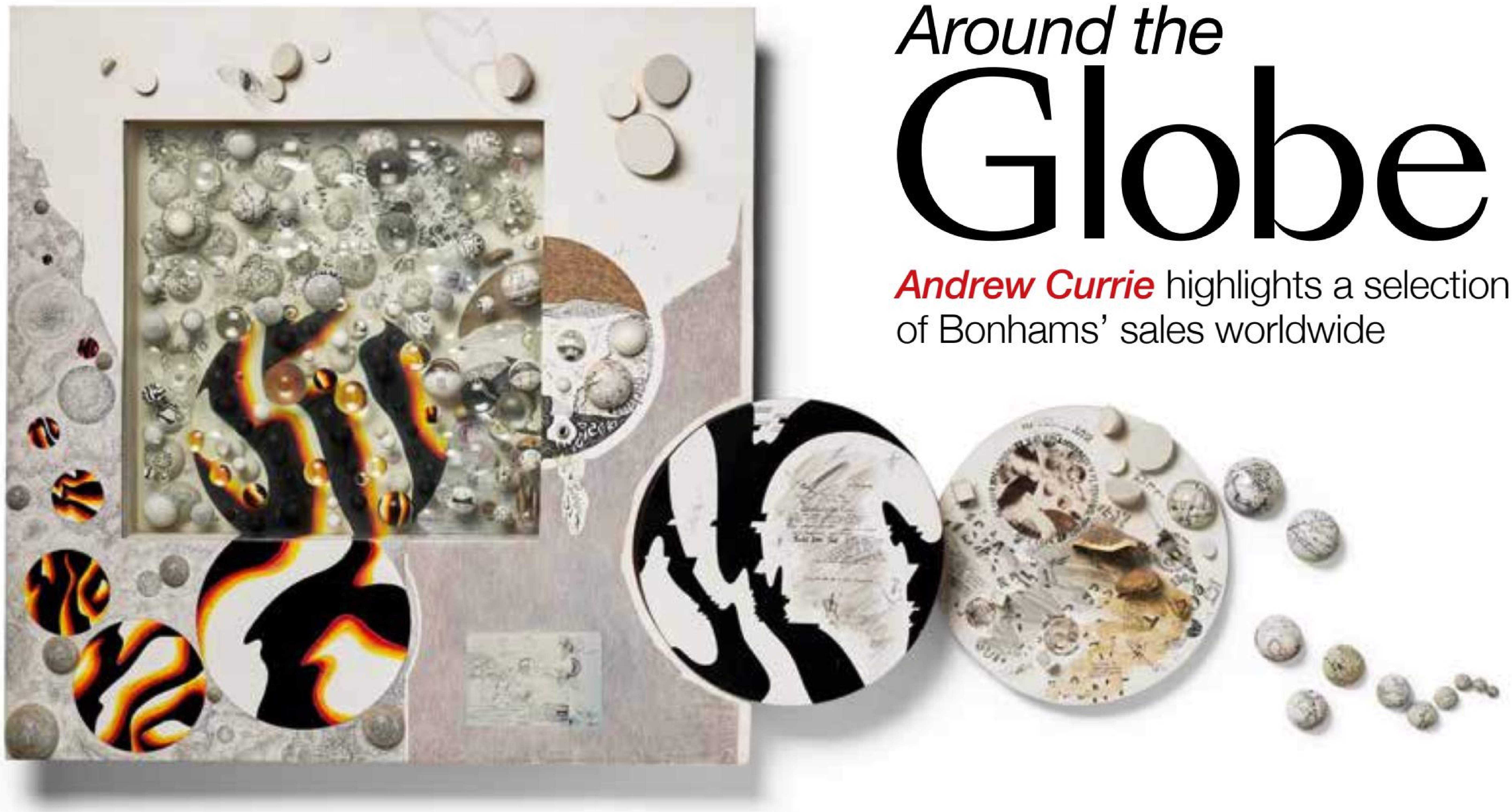


British. Cool.

London
Wednesday 29 March
10am

Andy Warhol (1928-1987)
Mick Jagger, from Mick Jagger Portfolio, 1975
signed in pencil by the artist and numbered 227/250,
signed in felt-tip pen by Mick Jagger
screenprint in colours
111 x 73.3cm (43¾ x 28in)
Estimate: £60,000 - 80,000
($70,000 - 100,000)

Enquiries: Janet Hardie
+44 (0) 20 7393 3949
janet.hardie@bonhams.com



Around the Globe

Andrew Currie highlights a selection of Bonhams' sales worldwide

New York
Magnet for masters

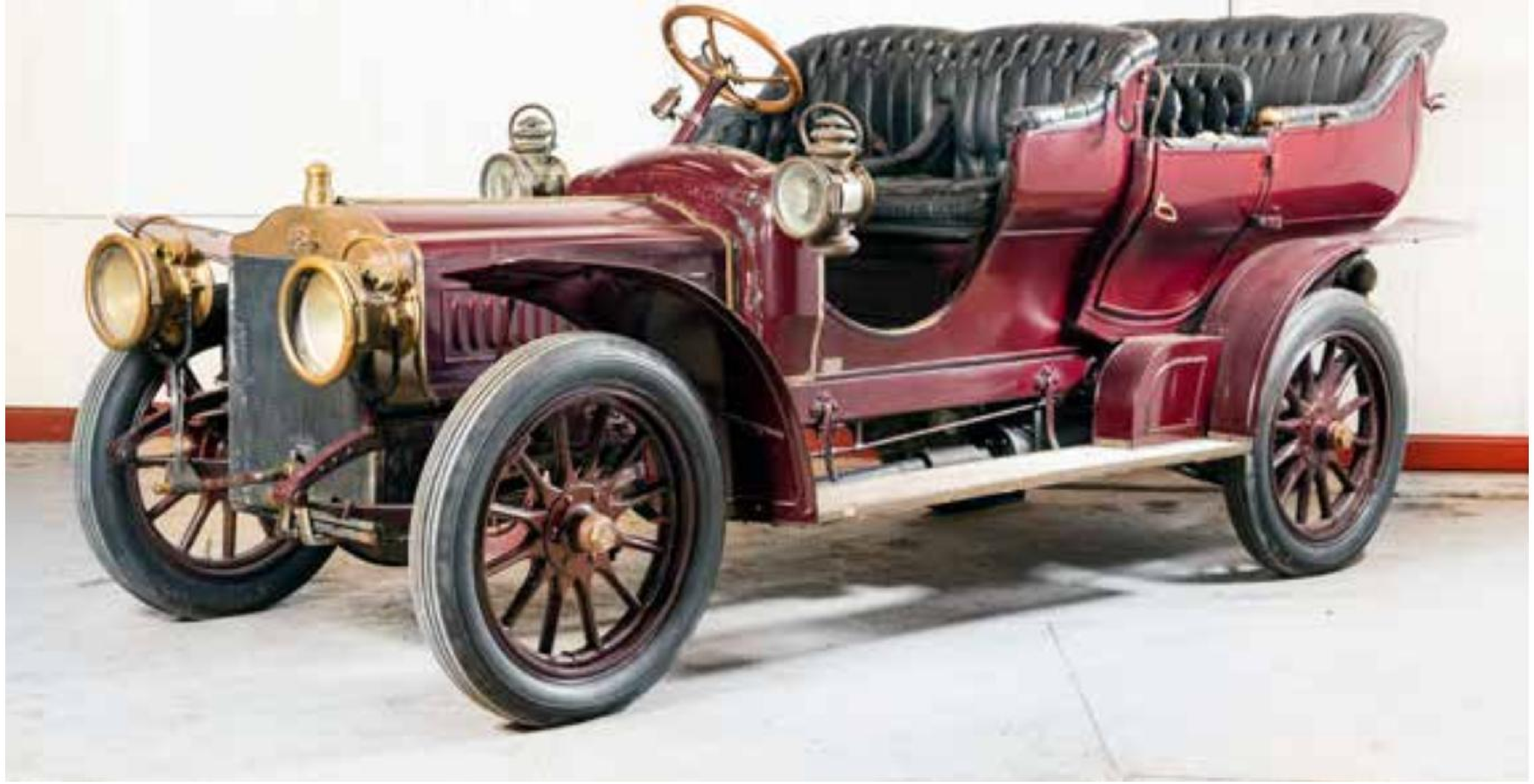
Fernanda Bonino was one of those rare figures whose influence spans continents, cultures and social circles. In New York in the 1960s and '70s, the vernissages at the gallery she ran with her husband Alfredo were hot-ticket events for the rich and famous. David and Nelson Rockefeller, Alfred Barr, John Lennon and many others gathered to admire the Boninos' latest discoveries. Fernanda took her responsibilities as a gallerist seriously, giving a platform to artists across all disciplines and nationalities, and she had a great eye. Agostino Bonalumi, Armando Morales and Marcelo Bonevardi are just some of the painters she championed whose work is to be found in permanent museum collections around the world. Her 1964 exhibition *Magnet* is widely credited as being a trail-blazer for Latin American art, and later she became a supporter of Frida Kahlo long before her genius was widely recognised. Fernanda filled her home on Great Jones Street with fabulous works of art, many of which are to be offered at Bonhams New York over the course of this year. They include, in May, *I Am a Pacifist but War Pictures Are Too Beautiful* (1964-66) by Mary Bauermeister, one of Fernanda's first and most important discoveries.

Image: *I Am a Pacifist but War Pictures Are Too Beautiful* by Mary Bauermeister
Estimate: $80,000 - 120,000
Sale: Post-War and Contemporary Art, New York, 18 May
Enquiries: Andrew Huber
+1 917 206 1633
andrew.huber@bonhams.com

Rhode Island
Round the world Flyer

The 1908 New York-to-Paris race was the first and only round-the-world automobile event ever held. Contested over 22,000 miles, the race was won by a 1907 Model 35 60hp Thomas Flyer, manufactured by E.R. Thomas Motor Car company of New York. This famous car's immediate predecessor was the 1906 Thomas 50hp Flyer Model 31 Touring Car, a rare example of which, complete with original coachwork and much of its original upholstery, is one of the stars of an exceptional collection of 'Brass Era' cars to be auctioned alongside the Audrain Veteran Car Tour in Newport, Rhode Island, in April. Assembled over more than 50 years by a father-and-son team, the Two Generations collection comprises 35 early motor cars. Among its wonders is an extremely rare 1911 Palmer-Singer 4-50 Seven Passenger Touring car. This short-lived marque, aimed directly at the rich and famous, was the brainchild of Henry Palmer and Charles Singer of the sewing machine family. They operated an upmarket car showroom on Broadway but, in 1908, decided to produce their own exclusive brand. They were, however, better at selling cars than making them, going bankrupt six years later. Thus a mere handful of Palmer-Singer cars survive.

Image: 1906 Thomas 50hp Flyer Model 31 Touring Car
Estimate: $400,000 - 500,000
Sale: Two Generations Collection, Newport Rhode Island, 29 April
Enquiries: Rupert Banner
+1 917 340 9652
rupert.banner@bonhams.com



New York
A ring to rule them all

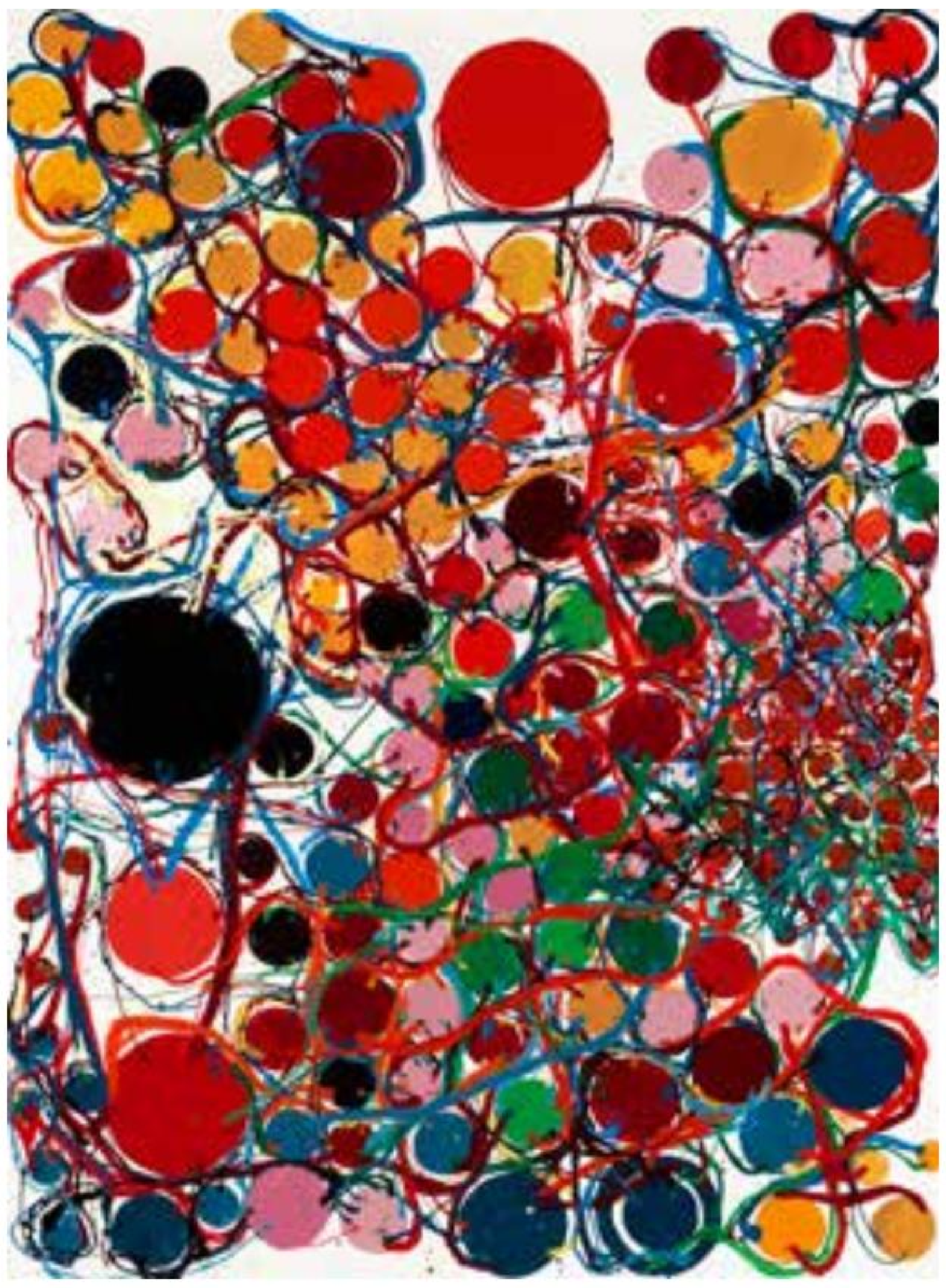
It's now 70 years since Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe assured us that 'Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend' in the 1953 film version of the hit Broadway musical *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. The lyrics sparkle still, and the appeal of diamonds has never dimmed, as an outstanding private collection of jewellery to be offered in New York in March bears out. It was assembled by a southern Californian owner with an exceptional eye. Their perfect and capacious jewellery box features 120 pieces, led by a magnificent LEVIEV diamond ring with, at its centre, a 35-carat emerald-cut diamond. In addition, the collection – estimated at between $4m to $6m – offers wonderful examples from Tiffany & Co., Chopard, Boucheron, Bvlgari, de Grisogono and Van Cleef & Arpels. Among the star lots is a very special early Art Deco diamond and gem-set sautoir by Mauboussin, Paris. Made in around 1920, it features an emerald cabochon with suspended ruby tassel mounted in platinum, as well as diamonds, emeralds, sapphires and rubies set throughout the chain.

Image: LEVIEV: A Diamond Ring, 35.00 carats
Estimate: $1,700,000 - 2,500,000
Sale: New York Jewels, New York, 8 March
Enquiries: Caroline Morrissey
+1 212 461 6526
caroline.morrissey@bonhams.com

Los Angeles
Furnished with greatness

The career of renowned Italian architect and designer Ettore Sottsass spanned many decades – he lived to be 90 – and many disciplines, including typewriters: he was responsible for the Olivetti Valentine 3, that classic of 20th-century design. It was, however, with the Memphis Group that he established in Milan in 1980 – the name is taken from a Bob Dylan song that was playing during the initial planning meeting – that he is most associated. The Group set out to break the rules and became known for their use of bold, often clashing, colours, which transformed their furniture into works of art. Sottsass carried this approach into Sottsass Associati, the architectural practice he founded in 1985, which also designed store interiors, exhibitions and furniture. The clientele was international, and one of Sottsass's first Californian projects was the Mayer-Schwarz Gallery on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, which opened in 1989 and was celebrated for its striking façade of black Marquina marble and its dramatic doorway of irregular folds. The gallery closed many years ago, but the bespoke Sottsass furnishings were preserved, and are now offered in Los Angeles in March. The 13 pieces include a custom-made window and a dual-purpose library/dining table with illuminating panel.

Image: Library/dining table designed by Ettore Sottsass for the Mayer-Schwarz Gallery
Estimate: $4,000 - 6,000
Sale: Modern Design | Art, Los Angeles, 29 March
Enquiries: Jason Stein
+1 323 436 5466
jason.stein@bonhams.com



Bruun Rasmussen
Electrifying art

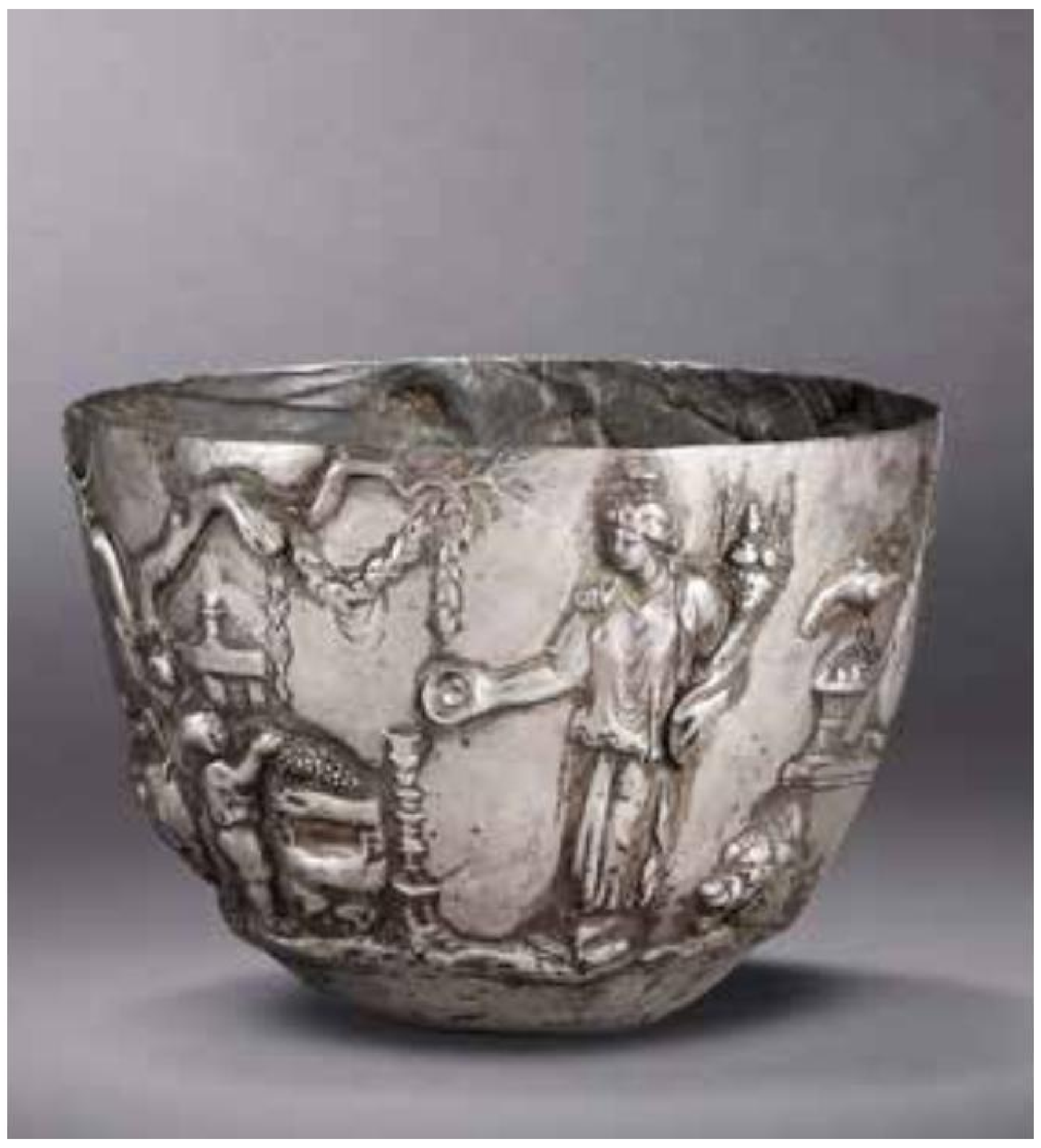
In 1956, the Japanese artist Atsuko Tanaka – a member of Gutai, the avant-garde collective famous for its performance and interactive art – performed in the 'Electric Dress'. Based on a kimono, the sculptural dress used 200 flashing lightbulbs and tubes in red, blue, yellow and green enamel paint – prompting her to wonder wryly if this was how a death-row prisoner felt. Happily, the Tanaka painting from 1966 offered at Bruun Rasmussen in March poses less of a risk. This untitled work is a perfect example of the visual language the artist developed as she moved into a post-Gutai period. It is based on a network of concentric circles and myriad connecting lines, a kind of diagram in bright colours, as if transferring the 'Electric Dress' into two dimensions.

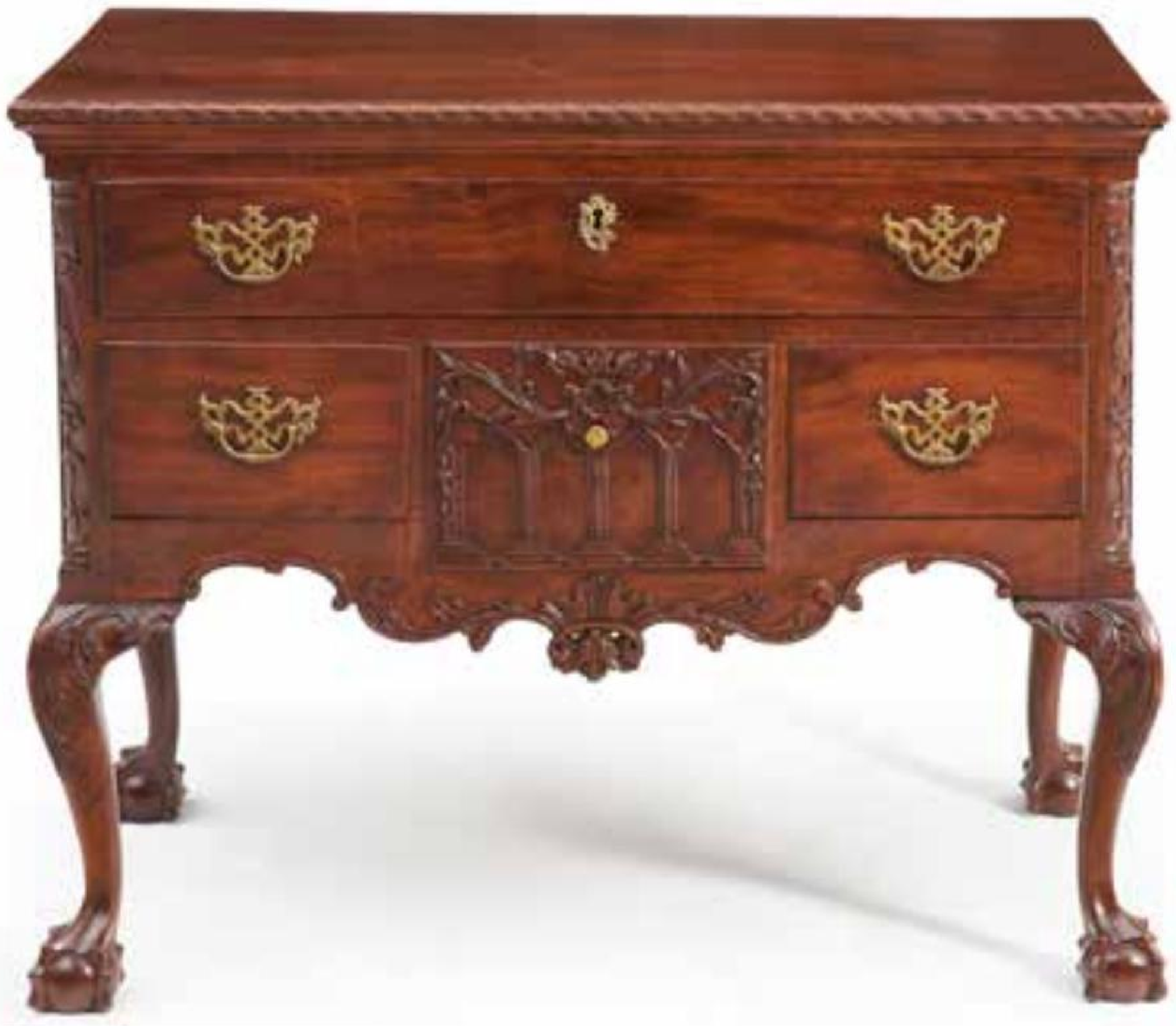
Image: *Untitled* by Atsuko Tanaka
Estimate: DKK4,000,000 - 6,000,000
Sale: Modern Art, Bruun Rasmussen, 7 March
Enquiries: Niels Raben
+45 8818 1181
nr@bruun-rasmussen.dk

Hong Kong
Crossroads of art

The ancient region of Gandhara was positioned at the crossroads of Asia, where Western aesthetic traditions mingled with the Buddhism of the East. The outcome was a cosmopolitan style of art, as epitomised in Hong Kong in April with an exhibition of one of the finest collections of Gandharan art in private hands. Formed over the past four decades, it is the fruit of one collector's single-minded pursuit of works of art from this fascinating period. The collection has been the ultimate reference point for scholars of Gandhara ever since its starring role in the landmark 1992 exhibition *The Crossroads of Asia: Transformation in Image and Symbol in the Art of Ancient Afghanistan and Pakistan* at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Here are rare and beautiful metal sculpture, jewellery, reliquaries and coins from the Hellenistic age through to the post-Kushan period (*c*.AD 375). Among the highlights is an exquisite silver cup from the 1st century BC. Very few comparable objects have appeared on the market, testifying to its rarity and importance.

Image: Silver cup with figures and deities in a rustic setting from the ancient region of Gandhara, 1st century BC
Enquiries: Dora Tan
+852 2918 4321
dora.tan@bonhams.com





Skinner
Transatlantic craft

Philadelphia in the mid-1700s had become not only America's largest city but also its busiest colonial port, attracting artisans from across Europe who offered the latest styles and techniques. These craftsman found clients among the burgeoning New England mercantile classes, among them Nicholas Power, a wealthy trader and ropemaker of Providence, Rhode Island. It was almost certainly Nicholas who purchased the very fine Chippendale dressing table that leads the Goddard Family collections online sale at Skinner in late March/early April. The table has been in the family since the late 19th century, and is part of a fascinating and eclectic collection of formal decorative arts, including exceptional 18th-century furniture, Asian porcelain, and paintings. Among the star pieces are a musical and astronomical burl bombe tall case clock by Jan Chris Sauer of Amsterdam and a collection of Rhode Island colonial and English silver.

Image: Power Family Chippendale Carved Mahogany Dressing Table, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, *c*.1765
Estimate: $100,000 - 150,000
Sale: Collections of the Historically Significant Goddard Family of Providence, Rhode Island, 26 March-5 April
Enquiries: americana@bonhamsskinner.com
+508 970 3200

Paris
Face mask

The early life of the Armenian painter Léon Tutundjian was deeply unsettled. His teacher father moved constantly looking for work, and his sudden death left the family destitute. In desperation, Léon's mother booked him on a boatful of Armenian orphans heading for Greece. He was 16 and essentially alone; no wonder he always hated boat travel. A move to Paris in 1923, when he was 19, provided much-needed stability. There he befriended his fellow Armenian painter Ervand Kochar, who introduced him to Miró, Picasso, Mondrian and Jacques Villon.

Tutundjian's *Masque jaune*, offered in March, dates from his Surrealist period. Inspired by Magritte and Dalí, Tutundjian developed visual metaphors imbued with subtle Indian and Persian influences. Although he never became a formal member of the Surrealists, he exhibited with them through the 1940s and '50s.

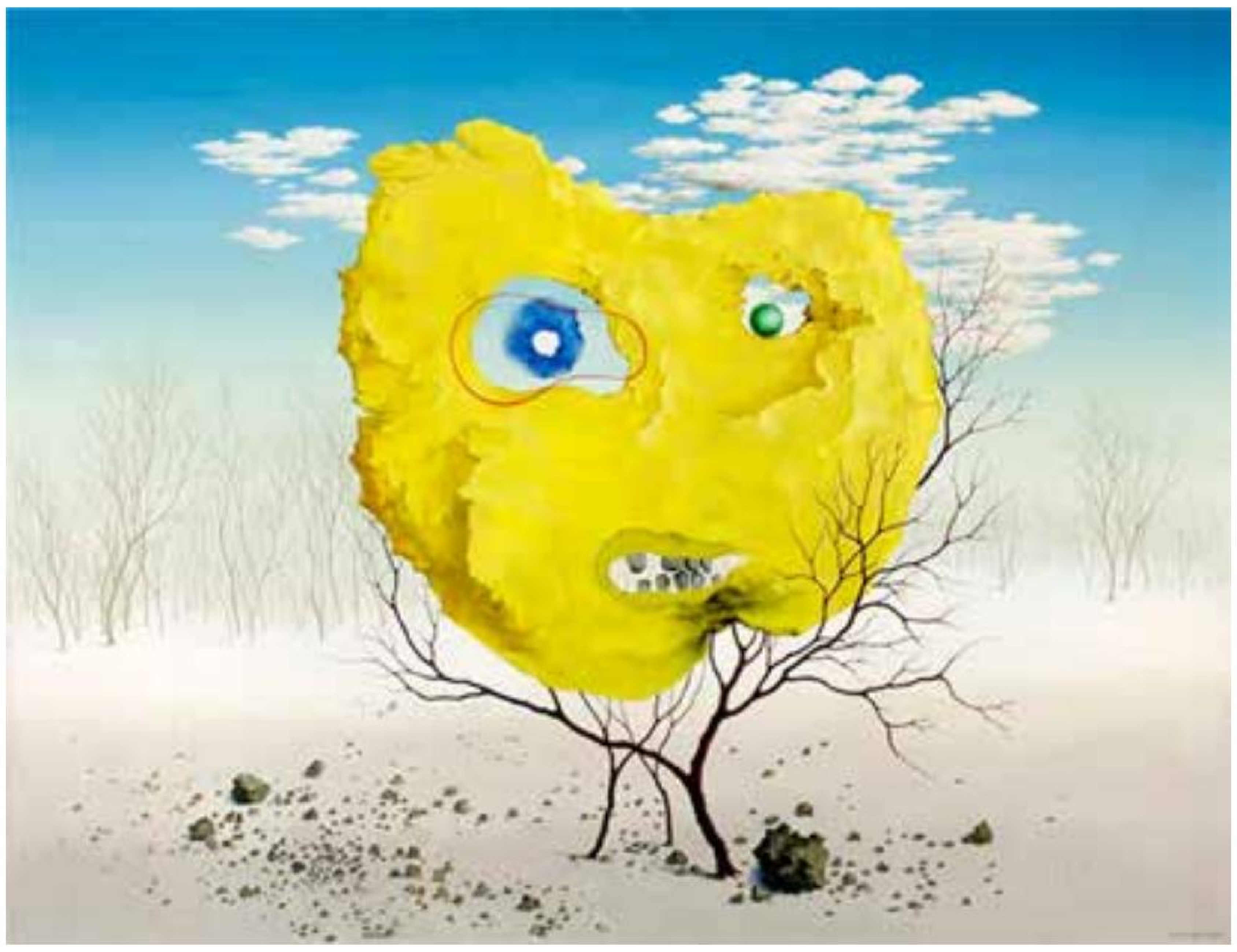
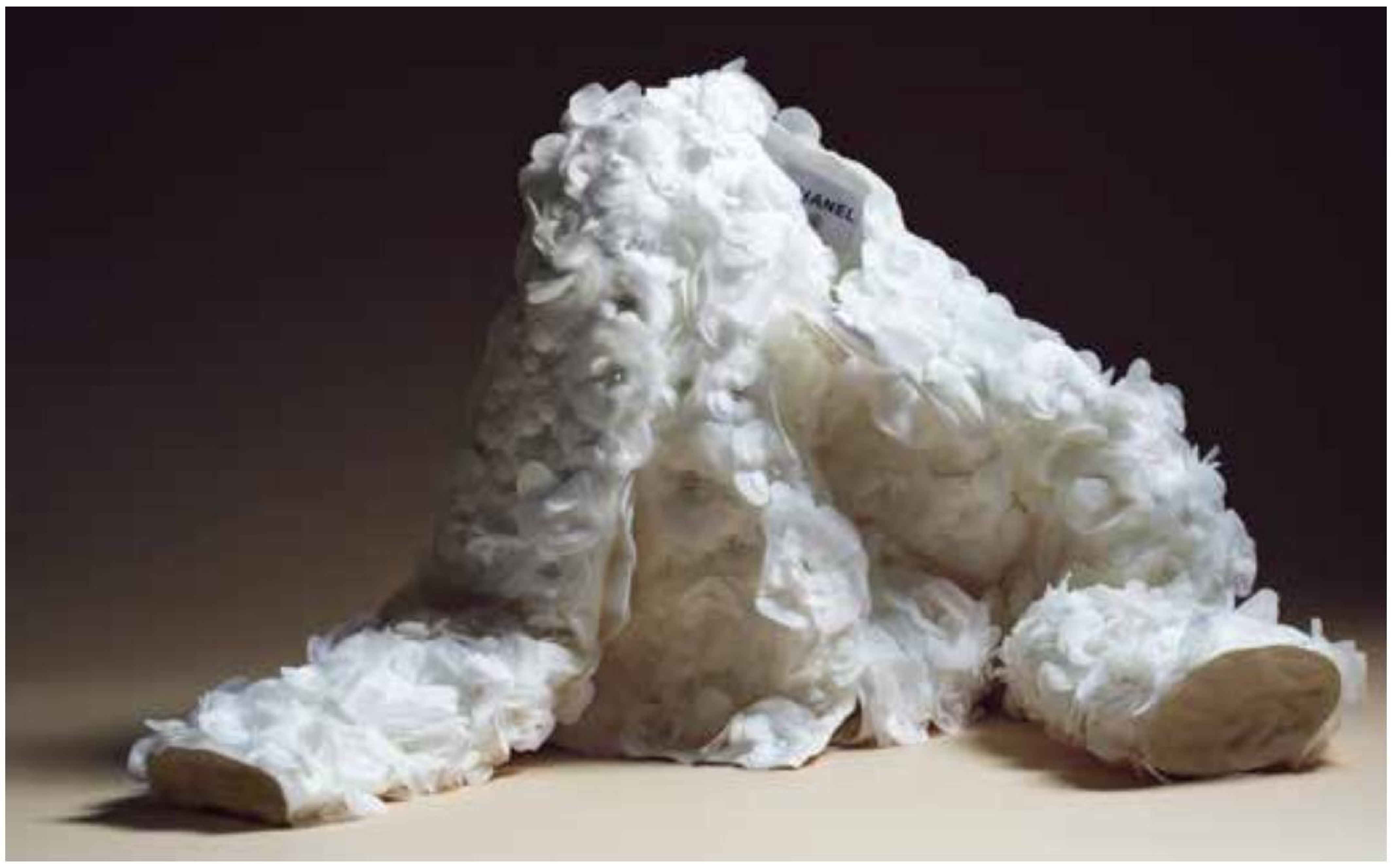


Image: *Masque jaune* by Léon Tutundjian
Estimate: €120,000 - 180,000
Sale: La Révolution Surréaliste/Surrealist Sale, Paris, 29 March
Enquiries: Emilie Millon
+33 1 4261 1010
emilie.millon@bonhams.com

Paris
Caroline Schulten

Caroline Schulten has been appointed Head of Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art in Paris, joining an expanding roster of world-class specialists. A graduate of Oxford University and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Caroline has more than 20 years' experience of Chinese art in both museums and auction houses. Fluent in German, English and French, she has worked in Berlin, Amsterdam, London, New York and Paris, and joins Bonhams from Sotheby's London. During her career, Caroline has handled many prominent collections and spearheaded several successful single-owner sales. Her first sale at Bonhams will take place during Printemps Asiatique in Paris in June.

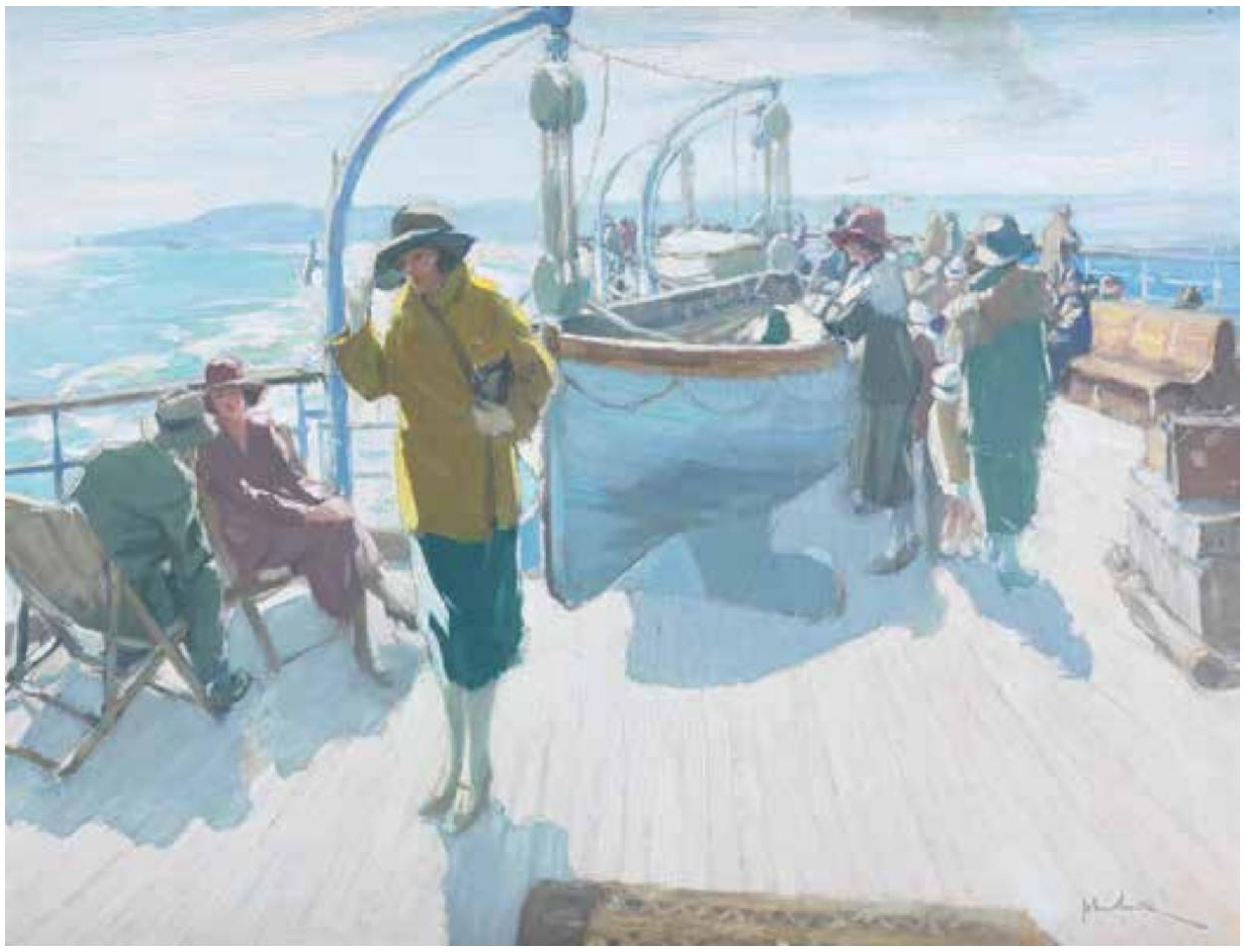
Enquiries: Caroline Schulten
+33 1 5679 1242
caroline.schulten@bonhams.com



Bukowskis
Well fashioned

Be the object of desire a humble football card or a sport car worth millions, every collector can recognise the urge to possess the finest and rarest examples, and the extraordinary satisfaction of completing a set. The owner of the world-class private collection of luxury fashion items to be offered by Bukowskis in an online sale in March must have experienced that feeling – many times over. The auction is a roll call of all the leading brands on the planet: Louis Vuitton, Hermès, Prada, Yves Saint Laurent, Gucci, Balenciaga, Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, Valentino, Givenchy, Versace, to name but a few. It is Chanel, though, that arguably takes pride of place, with the extremely rare 'Camelia Jacket' from 2019 – it is one of only ten that were ever made. Other coveted lots from Chanel include a 'Bird Cage Bag' from creative director Virginie Viard; a 'Crystal Ball' handbag, the Holy Grail of Chanel bags from the 2018 runway collection; and the highly sought-after 'Shopping Basket' from 2014. Every item is in pristine condition and has been lovingly kept in its original packaging. The 1,500-piece strong sale is the final one of a series of sales from the same collection – the fashion world has never seen anything quite like it.

Image: 'Camelia Jacket' by Chanel
Estimates: €24,000 - 30,000
Sale: Bukowskis online auction, 15-26 March
Enquiries: Johanna Fock
+46 (0) 708 921 974
johanna.fock@bukowskis.com



Scotland
'Doon the watter'

In 2015, Bonhams Edinburgh staged an exhibition of the Scottish painter John Smellie. *John Smellie: Painter of the Clyde Coast* was a turning point in his reputation. The artist was all but forgotten after he died young, in 1925 at the age of 38, shortly after turning professional. Many of his pictures capture carefree Glaswegians taking summer holidays 'doon the watter' at Largs, Millport, Hunters Quay and Tarbert, which blossomed in the 1920s as incomes and leisure time grew. *On the Clyde*, offered at the Scottish Art sale in May, is a perfect example of Smellie's work. Sun shines on the water, the luggage (complete with golf clubs) is piled high, the holidaymakers are in Sunday best – one elegant woman clutching her hat against the wind – all evoke of the joys to come, using his trademark free brushwork and magically restrained palette.

Image: *On the Clyde* by John Smellie
Estimate: £20,000-30,000
Sale: Scottish Art, Edinburgh, 17 May
Enquiries: May Matthews
+44 (0) 131 240 2297
may.matthews@bonhams.com

The Spring Stafford Sale

The International Classic MotorCycle Show
Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford
Saturday 22- Sunday 23 April

The Peter Hickman, 2022 Isle of Man TT Superbike and Senior Race Winning, Gas Monkey BMW by FHO Racing, 2022 BMW M1000RR Racing Motorcycle
Estimate: £80,000 - 100,000
($95,000 - 120,000)

Enquiries: +44 (0) 20 8963 2817
motorcycles@bonhams.com

SUOMY
10
GasMonkey
GasMonkey
Monster
alpha
Weise

Bonhams Salerooms & Offices Worldwide

London
101 New Bond Street
London W1S 1SR
+44 (0) 20 7447 7447

Montpelier Street London
SW7 1HH
+44 (0) 20 7393 3900

Paris
Bonhams Cornette de
Saint Cyr
6 avenue Hoche
75008 Paris, France
+33 1 47 27 11 24

4 rue de la Paix
75002 Paris
+33 (0) 1 42 61 10 10

Brussels
Bonhams Cornette de
Saint Cyr
89 Chaussée de Charleroi
1060 Brussels
+32 (0) 2 880 73 80

New York
580 Madison Avenue
New York, NY
10022
+1 (212) 644 9001

Los Angeles
7601 W Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles
CA 90046
+1 (323) 850 7500

Boston
Bonhams Skinner
Marlborough
274 Cedar Hill St,
Marlborough MA 01752
+1 508 970 3000

Bonhams Skinner
63 Park Plaza,
Boston MA 02116
+1 508 970 3211

Hong Kong
Suite 2001
One Pacific Place
88 Queensway
Admiralty, Hong Kong
+852 2918 4321

Edinburgh
22 Queen Street
Edinburgh
EH2 1JX
+44 131 225 2266

Sydney
97-99 Queen Street,
Woollahra, Sydney NSW
2025
+61 2 8412 2222

Stockholm
Bukowskis
Arsenalsgatan 2
Box 1754, 111 87
Stockholm, Sweden
+46 8 614 08 00

Copenhagen
Bruun Rasmussen
Bredgade 33
1260 Copenhagen,
Denmark
+45 8818 1111

AFRICA

Nigeria
Neil Coventry
+234 (0) 8110 033 792
+27 (0) 7611 20171
neil.coventry@
bonhams.com

South Africa – Johannesburg
Penny Culverwell
+27 (0) 71 342 2670
penny.culverwell@
bonhams.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney
97-99 Queen Street,
Woollahra, NSW 2025
Australia
+61 (0) 2 8412 2222
+61 (0) 2 9475 4110 fax
info.aus@bonhams.com

Melbourne
1130 High Street
Armadale VIC 3143
Australia
+61 (0) 3 8640 4088
+61 (0) 2 9475 4110 fax
info.aus@bonhams.com

ASIA

Beijing
Vivian Zhang
Unit C610, Beijing
Lufthansa Center,
50 Liangmaqiao Road,
Chaoyang District, Beijing
100125, China
+86 (0) 10 8424 3188
beijing@bonhams.com

Shanghai
Wang Jie
Room 409,4th Office
Building, International
Equatoral Hotel
No.65, Yan An Road West,
Jing An District Shanghai
200040, China
+86 (0) 21 6248 0258
shanghai@bonhams.com

Singapore
Bernadette Rankine
11th Floor, Wisma Atria
435 Orchard Road
Singapore 238877
+65 (0) 6701 8038
+65 (0) 6701 8001 fax
bernadette.rankine@
bonhams.com

Taiwan
Bobbie Hu
Suite 2012, 20F,
No. 333, Section 1
Keelung Road
Xinyi District, Taipei 110,
Taiwan
+886 2 2757 7070
taiwan@bonhams.com

EUROPE

Austria
Thomas Kamm
thomas.kamm
@bonhams.com
+49 900 89 2420 5812
austria@bonhams.com

Belgium
Christine De Schaetzen
christine.deschaetzen@
bonhams.com
Boulevard Saint
Michel 101
1040 Brussels
+32 (0) 2 736 5076
belgium@bonhams.com

France
Catherine Yaiche
catherine.yaiche@
bonhams.com
4 rue de la Paix
75002 Paris
+33 (0) 1 42 61 10 10
paris@bonhams.com

Germany – Cologne
Andrea von Bredow
+49 152 021 562 01
andrea.vonbredow@
bonhams.com
cologne@bonhams.com

Germany – Düsseldorf
Eva Lengler
+49 176 698 580 73
eva.lengler@bonhams.com
dusseldorf@bonhams.com

Germany – Frankfurt
Andrea von Bredow
+49 69 509 55 209
andrea.vonbredow@
bonhams.com
frankfurt@bonhams.com

Germany – Munich
Katharina Upmeyer
Maximilianstrasse 52
80538 Munich
+49 (0) 89 2420 5812
katharina.upmeyer@
bonhams.com
munich@bonhams.com

Greece
7 Neofytou Vamva Street
Athens 10674
+30 (0) 210 3636 404
athens@bonhams.com

Ireland
Kieran O'Boyle
kieran.oboyle@
bonhams.com
31 Molesworth Street
Dublin 2
+353 (0) 1 602 0990
ireland@bonhams.com

Italy – Milan
Benedetta Alpini
benedetta.alpini@
bonhams.com
Via Boccaccio 22
20123 Milano
+39 0 2 4953 9020
milan@bonhams.com

Italy – Rome
Emma Dalla Libera
emma.dallalibera@
bonhams.com
Via Sicilia 50
00187 Roma
+39 06 485 900
rome@bonhams.com

The Netherlands
Charlotte Roelofsen
charlotte.roelofsen@
bonhams.com
De Lairessestraat 154
1075 HL Amsterdam
+31 (0) 20 67 09 701
amsterdam@
bonhams.com

Portugal
Filipa De Andrade
filipa.deandrade@
bonhams.com
Rua Bartolomeu Dias
no160. 1o
Belem
1400-031 Lisbon
+351 218 293 291
portugal@bonhams.com

Spain – Barcelona & North
Teresa Ybarra
teresa.ybarra@
bonhams.com
+34 930 156 686
+34 680 347 606
barcelona@
bonhams.com

Spain – Madrid
Johann Leibbrandt
johann.leibbrandt@
bonhams.com
Núñez de Balboa
no 4-1C
28001 Madrid
+34 915 78 17 27

Switzerland – Geneva
Victoria Rey de Rudder
Victoria.Reyderudder@
bonhams.com
Rue Etienne-Dumont 10
1204 Geneva
+41 22 300 3160
geneva@bonhams.com

Switzerland – Zurich
Andrea Bodmer
andrea.bodmer@
bonhams.com
Stockerstrasse 12
8002 Zürich
+41 44 281 9535
zurich@bonhams.com

NORTH AMERICA

USA

Representatives:
Arizona
Terri Adrian-Hardy
terri.hardy@
bonhams.com
+1 (602) 684 5747
arizona@bonhams.com

California – Palm Springs
Brooke Sivo
brooke.sivo@
bonhams.com
+1 (760) 567 1744
palmsprings@
bonhams.com

California – San Diego
Brooke Sivo
brooke.sivo@
bonhams.com
+1 (760) 567 1744
sandiego@
bonhams.com

Florida
Kate Stamm
kate.stamm@bonhams.com
+1 (561) 319 2586
Luis Torres
luis.torres@bonhams.com
+1 (929) 215 1621
miami@bonhams.com

Illinois & Midwest
Natalie B Waechter
natalie.waechter@
bonhams.com
+1 (773) 267 3300
chicago@bonhams.com

Massachusetts & New England
Amy Corcoran
amy.corcoran@
bonhams.com
+1 (617) 742 0909
boston@bonhams.com

Nevada – Las Vegas
Brooke Sivo
brooke.sivo@
bonhams.com
+1 (760) 567 1744
lasvegas@bonhams.com

New Mexico
Terri Adrian-Hardy
terri.hardy@
bonhams.com
+1 (602) 859 1843
newmexico@
bonhams.com

Oregon & Idaho
Sheryl Acheson
sheryl.acheson@
bonhams.com
+1 (971) 727 7797
oregon@bonhams.com

San Francisco
601 California Street
Suite 150
San Francisco
CA 94108
+1 (415) 861 7500
info.us@bonhams.com

Texas – Dallas & Houston
Mary Holm
mary.holm@bonhams.com
+1 (214) 557 2716
Brandon Kennedy
brandon.kennedy@
bonhams.com
dallas@bonhams.com

Washington & Alaska
Heather O'Mahony
heather.omahony@
bonhams.com
+1 (206) 566 3913
seattle@
bonhams.com

Canada

Toronto, Ontario
Kristin Kearney
340 King St East
Toronto ON
M5A 1 KB
kristin.kearney@
bonhams.com
+1 (416) 462 9004
info.ca@bonhams.com

Representatives:
Vancouver, BC
Cailin Broere
cailin.broere@
bonhams.com
+1 (604) 841 7315
info.ca@bonhams.com

MIDDLE EAST

Israel
Joslynne Halibard
joslynne.halibard@
bonhams.com
+972 (0) 54 553 5337

UNITED KINGDOM

South East England

Brighton & Hove
Representative:
Tim Squire-Sanders
+44 1273 220 000
hove@bonhams.com

Guildford
Millmead,
Guildford,
Surrey GU2 4BE
+44 1483 504 030
guildford@
bonhams.com

Isle of Wight
+44 1273 220 000
isleofwight@
bonhams.com

West Sussex
+44 (0) 1273 220 000
sussex@
bonhams.com

Thames Valley

Oxford
Banbury Road
Shipton on Cherwell
Kidlington OX5 1JH
+44 1865 853 640
oxford@
bonhams.com

Bonhams MPH
The Guard House
Bicester Heritage
Bicester, Oxfordshire
OX26 5HA
+44 1869 229 477
mph@bonhams.com

South West England

Bath
Queen Square House
Charlotte Street
Bath, BA1 2LL
+44 1225 788 988
bath@bonhams.com

Dorset
Representative:
Emma Sykes
+44 1225 788 982
bath@bonhams.com

Exeter
Richmond Court,
Emperor Way, Exeter,
Devon,
EX1 3QS
+44 1392 425 264
exeter@bonhams.com

Tetbury
Eight Bells House
14 Church Street
Tetbury
Gloucestershire
GL8 8JG
+44 1666 502 200
tetbury_office@
bonhams.com

Truro
36 Lemon Street
Truro
TR1 2NR
+44 1872 250 170
truro@bonhams.com

Midlands

Knowle
21B Station Road
Knowle, West Midlands
B93 0HL
+44 1564 776 151
knowle@
bonhams.com

Yorkshire & North East England

Leeds, North East, Lincolnshire & Nottinghamshire
The West Wing
Bowcliffe Hall
Bramham
Leeds, LS23 6LP
+44 113 234 5755
leeds@bonhams.com

East Anglia

Bury St Edmunds
Representative:
Michael Steel
+44 1284 716 190
bury@bonhams.com

Norfolk and South Lincolnshire
Representative:
Claire Tuck
+44 1603 871 443
norfolk@
bonhams.com

North West England

Chester, North West and North Wales
2 St Johns Court
Vicars Lane
Chester, CH1 1QE
+44 1244 313 936
chester@
bonhams.com

Manchester
Representative:
Antony Bennett
+44 161 927 3822
manchester@
bonhams.com

Channel Islands

Guernsey
Representative:
Angela Peel
+44 1481 722 448
guernsey@
bonhams.com

Jersey
La Chasse
La Rue de la Vallée
St Mary
Jersey, JE3 3DL
+44 1534 722 441
jersey@bonhams.com

Scotland

Glasgow/West of Scotland
Representative:
Gordon McFarlan
+44 141 223 8866
glasgow@
bonhams.com

Wales

Cardiff
Representative:
Emma Sykes
+44 292 072 7980
cardiff@bonhams.com

Please note:

All sale dates are subject to change. Readers are advised to contact the department concerned for exact details.

For information and details of sale dates, or about the objects and paintings pictured, please contact Customer Services at Bonhams New Bond Street on +44 (0) 20 7447 7447.

Modern & Contemporary African Art

London
Wednesday 22 March
3pm

Yusuf Adebayo Cameron Grillo (Nigerian, 1934-2021)
The Seventh Knot (detail), 1969
oil on board
121 x 75cm (47 x 29in)
Estimate: £150,000 - 200,000
($180,000 - 250,000)

Enquiries: Helene Love-Allotey
+44 (0) 20 7468 8213
helene.love-allotey@bonhams.com

© GPL images

© GPL images

My Favourite Room

For ***Sir Jackie Stewart***, nowhere in the world is more romantic than one particular Scottish café

My favourite room probably sounds really off the wall. It's Dino's Café, which sits on the seafront at Helensburgh, on the west coast of Scotland.

Back in 1957, I was an 18-year-old mechanic at my father's Dumbuck Garage in nearby Dumbarton. At the time, we all knew Dino's Radio Café. Karl and Fiona Giarchi, who have now run it for nearly four decades, are proudly celebrating its centenary this year: it was established in 1923.

When it first opened, cafés could not sell alcohol, so most had a piano or a band to attract custom. But that needed an expensive entertainment licence, and musicians had to be paid. The two Italians who founded 'my' café couldn't afford either, so they installed what was then a new-fangled and rare radio. The place became an instant hit. By the '50s, it had a jukebox, and for teenagers it had become Helensburgh central.

Back then I played a lot of golf with a friend, Jim MacPherson. Jim and his girlfriend, Irene Fraser, fixed me up with a blind date, so we could all to go out in a Jaguar Mark II saloon I'd borrowed from our garage. We were going to drive up to Garelochhead, then Loch Lomond, and back – a nice run.

Jim and Irene had arranged for us to meet this date, Patricia Singleton, in Dino's Café. We walked in and Jim introduced us: "Jackie's going to take us for a run in his Jaguar." She just looked me up and down, and said: "Oh no he's not!". And that was that. I was crushed, really disappointed.

Jim and I then walked across to where Irene had taken a seat in an open booth in an alcove with another girl she knew, named Helen McGregor, the local baker's daughter.

Dino's did great Italian ice-cream – it still does. You could have a 'single-nugget' ice-cream or a 'double-nugget', with either one or two little biscuity nougat things – I preferred the single-nugget. Anyway, we sat and talked, and then I asked Helen if she'd like to come along for the ride. And she did. We talked some more – something clicked... we got married in 1962, and have been together ever since.

> "Jackie's going to take us for a run in his Jaguar." She just looked me up and down, and said: "Oh no he's not!"

So that's why Dino's Café – formerly Dino's Radio Café – is my favourite room. I still drop by for a single-nugget ice-cream whenever I'm nearby.

And I even still remember what was playing constantly on its jukebox that day: Pat Boone's latest hit 'Love Letters in the Sand'.

Dino's Café, 31 West Clyde Street, Helensburgh (01436 674667).

Sir Jackie Stewart set up the charity Race Against Dementia (raceagainstdementia.com) to fund research after Helen was diagnosed with the disease. Any donation is most welcome.

co//ect

THE LEADING INTERNATIONAL FAIR FOR
CONTEMPORARY CRAFT AND DESIGN

3–5 MARCH 2023
PREVIEWS 1–2 MARCH
SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON

TICKETS ON SALE NOW
COLLECTFAIR.ORG.UK
@COLLECTARTFAIR

Xanthe Somers, *Like Sour Milk On A Hot Day*, 2022
glazed stoneware, represented at Collect by Galerie REVEL

Crafts Council

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

SOMERSET HOUSE stop inside think outside

Silver, Kongsberg Mine, Buskerud, Norway
15.3 cm tall x 12.8 cm wide
Provenance: Ragnvald Støren (1877-1953),
smeltery master 1915-1947,
Director 1944-45, Kongsberg Silver Mines.

WILENSKY
EXQUISITE MINERALS

wilenskyminerals.com